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Percy B Shelley.

FROM A MINIATURE IN THE POSSESSION OF HIS SON.

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THE LIFE

OF

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

24193

BY

THOMAS JEFFERSON HOGG.

"Come, I will sing you some low, sleepy tune,
Not cheerful, nor yet sad; some dull old thing,
Some outworn and unused monotony,
Such as our country gossips sing and spin,
Till they almost forget they live."—*The Cenci.*

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IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
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1858.

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TO

THE HON. JANE,

THE WIFE OF SIR PERCY FLORENCE SHELLEY, BART.,

THE LADY AT WHOSE REQUEST

THE DELICATE AND DIFFICULT TASK WAS UNDERTAKEN

OF GIVING A FULL AND AUTHENTIC ACCOUNT

OF A LIFE INNOCENT AND IMAGINATIVE,

EVEN OF THE LIFE OF HER INCOMPARABLE FATHER-IN-LAW,

THE DIVINE POET,

THESE VOLUMES ARE RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY HER FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

"What are they, if they knew their calling high,
But crushed perfumes exhaling to the sky;
Or weeping clouds, that but awhile are seen,
Yet keep the earth, they haste to, bright and green!"

"THIS is a motto befitting all the illustrious unhappy. But it is too presumptuous an one for me to use, though it bears some affinity to the strange world I fabricate about me, and to the destiny I conceive to be marked out for me. By his works Shelley has raised himself to that well deserved height, that must make him the wonder and glory of future ages. But his private life would remain unknown, and many of his most excellent qualities sleep with his beloved ashes, if I did not fulfil the task of recording them. His life was in every way romantic, and to have been united to him, and to have been the partner of his fortunes for eight

years, has imbued my thoughts and existence with romance; it is, indeed, only by help of this feeling, and the indulgence that I give to it, that I can in any way endure the prolongation of life marked out for me in the eternal decrees. Strip my situation of its adventitious colours, and what is it? Alas! in the drear visitings of cold reality, in moments of torpid despair, I but too truly feel what it is. I am one cut off in the prime of life from hope, enjoyment, and prosperity. The prospect was smiling, but I am in a desert; the rock on which I built my hopes has crumbled away; my bark of refuge is wrecked, while the universal flood from out of the opened windows of Heaven is emptying its tempests upon me. But I extricate myself from these ideas, and arranging myself in the majesty of the imagination, I give other, and, in very truth, truer names to the circumstances around me. I was the chosen mate of a celestial spirit. He has left me, and I am here to learn wisdom until I am fitted to join him in his native sky. I was the mother of lovely children; they are gone to attend him in his beautiful mansion; yet, in pity, they have left one behind them to adorn my loneliness. Methinks my calling is high; I am to justify his ways; I am to make him beloved to all posterity.

My goal is fixed. The prize waves in the air, and I am ready for the course. Who are the spectators? Sits umpire Love, and all the virtues attend him. There Wisdom and Self-approbation sit enthroned, and the wise and good of all ages throng around. These are to be my future companions, and I must work hard to make myself worthy of so illustrious a company. Thus I would make my misery my crown; my solitude, my select society of worthies; my tears, the ambrosia conferring immortality; my eternal regrets, the nectar to inebriate me, until I arrive at the divine impulse, which is to inspire my tale. I am a priestess, dedicated to his glorification by my sufferings; the bride of the dead, my daily sacrifice is brought to his temple, and under the shadow of his memory I watch each sun to its decline."

* * * * *

"I shall write his Life, and thus occupy myself in the only manner from which I can derive consolation. It will be a task that may bring some balm. What, though I weep? What, though each letter costs a tear? All is better than inaction—not forgetfulness—that never is, but an inactivity of remembrance. Well, I shall commence my task; commemorate the virtues of the only creature on

earth worth loving or living for, and then, may be, I may join him; moonshine may be united to her planet, and wander no more, a sad reflection of all she loved on earth. And you, my own boy, I am about to begin a task which, if you live, will be an invaluable treasure in after-times. I must collect my materials; and then, in the commemoration of the divine virtues of your father, I shall fulfil the only act of pleasure there remains for me, and be ready to follow you, my child, if you should leave me, my task being accomplished."

* * * * *

"One of Shelley's characteristics was, that although he had a passion for the reformation of mankind, and though he sacrificed both himself and his possessions to the general and individual view of this question, yet he was never a dupe; his penetration was wonderful; he read a man's character in his look, his gesture, his phraseology, and I never knew him mistaken. I would rely on his judgment of a character, as on omniscience, and most certainly was never deceived, when others might think that the ingratitude and treachery which he often encountered, might have disappointed him. It did not, for he expected it. He acted from the fixed principle of endeavouring to benefit and improve

each person with whom he had communion; and his chief method to achieve the latter was to make the person satisfied with himself. He was right: the constant benevolence of manner and action to which this system gave rise, and from which he never deviated, except on the most pressing necessity of self-defence; this amenity of manner awoke an enthusiasm of love, that of force amended and exalted his friends; and that mind must have been cold and depraved which did not experience this necessary result from his sensibility united to his urbanity."

So far Mrs. Shelley has written, but not farther, except a few scraps, which have been inserted at the commencement of this work. The following letter will best explain the motives and the necessity of her silence, and will fully justify it:—

41, Park Street, *Dec.* 11, 1838.

Dear Jefferson,

J—— has told you, I suppose, that I am about to publish an Edition of Shelley's Poems. She says, you have not a "Queen Mab." Yet have you not? Did not Shelley give you one—one of the first printed? If you will lend it me, I shall

be so very much obliged; and I will return it safely when the book is printed.

Will you lend me your "Alastor" also? It will not go to the printer; I shall only correct the press from it.

Sir Timothy forbids Biography, under a threat of stopping the supplies. What could I do then? How could I live? And my poor boy! But I mean to write a few Notes appertaining to the history of the Poems. If you have any of Shelley's letters, mentioning his poetry, and would communicate them, I should be glad, and thank you.

I am ever truly yours,

MARY W. S.

To T. J. H., Temple.

The Notes appeared, together with the "Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley," not long after the date of this letter. They are exceedingly valuable, and have been read with interest and delight. Be silent, or starve! The prohibition is certainly hard: harder than all things; harder than all hard things; harder than all hard things put together, and hardened into one superlatively hard thing. The poor widowed dove was forbidden to lament her lost mate; the consolation of bewailing and celebrating him was denied her on pain of

death. The brother poets have told us, that Philomela was treated with barbarous cruelty, yet perpetual silence was not enjoined; and every returning summer we hear the nightingale re-iterating anew her plaintive, love-lorn sorrows in woods and groves. But we must restrain our indignation. Let us be just. The author of the injunction did not know how severe it was. He never felt as an enthusiastic biographer feels; he never glowed with generous desire to vindicate aspersed, but unsullied, honour, to maintain the just claims of transcendant genius. So that a man had an abundant share of the creature comforts, or at least a competent maintenance, he had all that could be wished for; everything else was sentiment, illusion, affectation: such, no doubt, was his honest and intimate conviction. Thus, a certain would-be Junius—a person as incapable of writing the celebrated work which he laboured to father upon himself, as was the proud jackdaw of producing peacocks' feathers,—is reported to have said to his daughter, as she stood weeping by her mother's coffin: "Come, come, screw her down, screw her down; let us have nō snivelling here!" It might be unfair to assert that the fellow was a brute; he was, probably, only a man destitute of

the ordinary feelings of humanity, who was really unable to comprehend how so trivial a matter as the death of a beloved parent could be the cause to a child of unaffected grief, of genuine, gushing tears. If the bereaved lady—illustrious in her parentage, illustrious in herself and in her works, and most illustrious through her union with the divine Poet—had been permitted to complete the narrative which she had begun, she would have given to the world a precious volume, a book more golden than gold. During the eight years that she was the partner of his fortunes, her account of a life, in every way romantic, would have been inestimable. To esteem or to extol the genius and character of Shelley too highly is impossible; consequently, even her partiality and affection, however excessive, could never have offended against truth and verisimilitude. The earlier, and perhaps the more interesting, portion of a wild and wondrous tale could only have been told by her at second-hand from the relations of others. It was my good fortune to see much of Shelley,—to know more of him, indeed, on the whole, than any one; and, therefore, I have constantly been pointed at as "the person best qualified for such an undertaking." A hasty, careless, and inaccurate compiler has transferred my proper

office to another; my bishopric some metropolitan versifier is to take, who for a long time preyed most perseveringly on Shelley's substance. If it were a question of assets, of faculties, of effects,—the taking an account of plunder,—an inventory of sums received, of moneys to be repaid, refunded, and disgorged,—a mere calculation of the wind that had been raised,—this indication of the person best qualified to be the biographer of a prince amongst poets would be judicious. His statements might be instructive and astonishing; he would effect much, but not quite all that is required. I corresponded regularly with Shelley, with greater or less frequency, according to circumstances, and I have preserved his numerous letters. Some persons, who affirm that they received whole volumes of epistles from him, declare that they have, unfortunately, lost them. I do not scruple to make public his remarkable communications; justice to his character and the interests of truth demand the publication. It is to be lamented, that of my letters to my friend scarcely one has been saved; because, having been written at the moment and on the spur of the occasion, they would have given a fresh and graphic representation of many events and actions, of which the recollection is now faint and imperfect. We

often conversed together about the projected biography of my incomparable friend; but no definite arrangement was ever made with his family for giving a full and authentic account of his innocent and imaginative life. It was agreed, however, that, by way of commencement, I should relate, in some periodical, as much as I could remember of those happy days which we spent together at Oxford. With this view Mrs. Shelley introduced me to the estimable and accomplished editor of the "New Monthly Magazine," and procured for me the very great advantage of his acquaintance, from whom, on that occasion, and subsequently, I met with much politeness and real kindness. But to write articles in a magazine or a review, is to walk in leading-strings; to march in rank and file under the command of subaltern officers. However, I submitted to the requirements and restraints of bibliopolar discipline, and I contributed six or seven papers; being content to speak of my young fellow-collegian, not exactly as I would, but as I might. I never had the honour to be the editor of a magazine, or of any other periodical publication, and, therefore, I cannot pretend to be a judge of the feelings and responsibilities of a person in such a position. They seem, indeed, to be more serious

and oppressive than those who have not felt the weight of empire would suppose; they can be duly appreciated by Atlas alone, for he has actually borne whole constellations of stars and splendour upon his labouring shoulders. I struggled at first, and feebly, for full liberty of speech; for a larger licence of commendation and admiration; for entire freedom of the press without censorship. With what success I contended the following letter will show. It relates to a matter of public concernment, and therefore I do not hesitate to make it known to the public, whom it concerns. It is one of many letters on the same subject; but one will suffice:

Jan. 12, 1832.

My Dear Sir,

I am very sorry you are displeased with the omissions in your article. Let us come to a right understanding on this head at once. It is not pleasant to me ever to alter an author's MS. for two reasons: First, because it is a trouble I could with greater profit to myself devote to my own compositions. Secondly, because it is an office that can never gratify the author. But if an editor lays before him one great—paramount—consistent object in a periodical, alteration and omission become of

frequent necessity. You must remember, that an oneness of opinion in all the papers is then requisite. Now, what I omitted in your paper, and what I altered, were chiefly passages in which I could not agree with you (about Oxford, and persons in Oxford, for instance); a few verbal changes occurred also—but they were chiefly in epithets and phrases, in which I thought a little exaggeration, natural to description and to friendship, had crept in. But on these matters you must allow me to say that, if an editor be worth a straw, he must be absolute and unquestioned; and however deep the regret I should feel in losing any contribution of yours, I must do so, rather than resign a privilege that I believe to be also a duty. I dwell the more on this, because I have not yet done more than glance over a few lines in your second paper: and I there see, that your natural affection for Shelley carries you a little beyond that estimate of what he has left to the world, which as yet we are authorised to express. It is probable that this strain may be continued through the whole, and therefore require modification. Let us, then, be candid with each other. I, on my part, will not alter, or rather omit, which is my chief sin, without necessity—and will you, on your part, kindly suffer

me to use my own discretion, when that necessity is apparent?

Truly yours,

E. L. BULWER.

If it should seem to me, that alteration *to any extent* is necessary, I shall return you the MS. to alter yourself. All I claim is, the power of omission, or abridgment, to such extent as I judge discreet; and that of *alteration* only in slight matters; to omit, in short, as much as I like, and alter as *little* as I can. When you *republish* the articles, to which, I dare say, there will be no objection, you can *amend* them, &c. In regard to the proposed article on his Poetry, I fear that we should not agree. You evidently admire him as a Poet, far more than *I* think criticism warrants us in doing. He is great in parts; but, the "Cenci" excepted, does not, in my opinion, effect a great whole. But the additional anecdotes on his life and opinions will be, I trust and believe, acceptable.

To T. J. H., Temple.

"The Shelley Papers," for they soon came to be spoken of and referred to under this title, were successful. They were satisfactory to the Poet's friends and admirers, notwithstanding the some-

what subdued tone which I was constrained to adopt, and the farther dilutions that were made, always no doubt in strict accordance with the rules of art and the canons of editorial revision. I confess that I always have been, and still am, sensitive, too much so perhaps, in the matter of correction, or alteration, by editors, joint-editors, sub-editors. I am content at all times to throw pearls before swine, only I must be permitted, for my own credit's sake, to throw real pearls before them, not glass beads and other worthless counterfeits, substitutes for my marine treasures. I was once requested to write something or other on behalf of a knot of people, who busied themselves for a time in diffusing at a low price in shabby pamphlets, what they accounted useful knowledge. As a powerful inducement I was solemnly assured, that whatever I wrote would certainly be revised and corrected *seriatim*, by every one of the conceited, self-satisfied diffusers whose names were printed on the covers of "their unsightly publications." The proposal was a tempting one, but I was not the possessor of any knowledge sufficiently useful to bear the ordeal of so much useless intermeddling. Too many cooks spoil the broth; and the soup-kitchen of science in *formâ pauperis* was soon shut up without my assistance.

The "Shelley Papers" were pillaged freely by amateur biographers, sometimes without acknowledgment, and always without permission; the publication was anonymous, but my name has been used as freely in connection with them, as if I had myself prefixed it to these sketches. I have sometimes been informed by a total stranger, that he was about to compose a Life of Shelley, and intended to reprint the "Shelley Papers" at length; and I have been ordered to send forthwith to his address, all anecdotes, letters, and unpublished pieces in aid of his precious work. I found it advisable to take no notice whatever of such applications; for a civil answer has brought upon me, more than once, a reply full of virulent abuse from the suburban scribbler. It would seem, that in the case of Shelley the laws of property were suspended or abrogated; his earlier works were pirated with impunity; his books, letters, and papers were stolen; his writings were found, and without scruple made public by the finder. The forgery of his correspondence, a curious matter, of which hereafter, was an extensive and a profitable speculation. It may be as well to state that, from the 28th of July, 1814, until a few days before his death, Shelley kept regularly a journal of his daily life, recording,

day by day, all that he did, read, and wrote; mentioning the letters received and sent by himself, the places which he visited, and the persons whom he saw. These MSS. are valuable on many accounts; they are useful in being a check upon misrepresentations and inventions, and a test of the veracity and correctness of volunteer and amateur biographers; they are sovereign indeed in detecting fabrications and forgeries. Many pages are little more than dates, lists of books, and names of places and persons, but much curious matter is interspersed; whatever is interesting shall be presented hereafter without reserve, nothing of value being kept back. Nor were the friends of Shelley exempt from predatory incursions; their journals, memoranda, note-books; their pictures, drawings, and precious relics; were appropriated as derelict, or seized as plunder by some bold buccanier. Many admirers, devoted hero-worshippers, are offended and mortified by the innumerable unlike and unfavourable portraitures of the divine lineaments of a lovely character drawn by unskilful hands; but, I confess, I do not sympathize with them; I am not annoyed by the clumsy workmanship and spurious imitations. Suffer these vulgar daubers, I would say, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom

of heaven. It must of necessity be thus with all hero-worship. To be often ill-praised is an essential condition to the universality of renown. For example, if St. Paul might be commended by eloquent preachers only, by profound theologians, by erudite and exquisitely judicious eulogists alone, his merits would be seldom celebrated; but inasmuch as the dull, drowsy prater, the illiterate sectary, the ignorant, the indiscreet, the intemperate, may trumpet forth his praises without restraint, the Apostle of the Gentiles now is, and ever will be, illustrious far and wide.

The Life of Shelley will frequently suggest that momentous subject, the reformation of our two magnificent universities, especially of the glorious university of Oxford, and will direct our attention to the real point of the case. A strict and searching inquiry into the actual condition of these most important institutions is imperiously demanded; a thorough, unsparing, unflinching investigation. It is necessary to ascertain forthwith, not whether a little more of this or of that, and a little less of the other, is taught there; whether the regents meet to talk stuff in the House of Convocation on Tuesday or on Thursday, in cramped Latin, or in lax English, and in larger or smaller numbers; but

to answer distinctly the one vital and decisive question, which will be evaded as long as possible, How is the enormous mass of splendid patronage bestowed? Have they ever given anything to the right person? If they have, what, and to whom? The right of patronage is the most sacred of all sacred trusts; the criminal abuse of it, through jobbing and nepotism, is an eating, destroying cancer, fatal alike to Church and State. Society has manfully asserted at last this great truth, and is fully prepared and resolved to follow out in practice the assertion of principle. And not merely prospectively, but, to a certain extent, retrospectively also, will the sage and salutary reform be accomplished. Prospectively, by sternly forbidding offences under heavy penalties, and severely punishing in future all offenders; and retrospectively also, as sanguine and zealous reformers confidently declare, by removing without delay or compunction every recipient tainted by nepotism. People talk loudly of the sanctity of vested rights; and the right of these objects of partial patronage no doubt is sacred; it is the right to undergo condign chastisement. They speak boldly and fiercely of compensation; and perhaps, in strictness, compensation ought to be made by disgorging,

under the strong compulsion of the sounding lash, every penny of what has been undeservedly and corruptly received.

Shelley was great as a poet—divine, indeed; great as a philosopher, as a moralist, as a scholar, as a complete and finished gentleman, great in every respect as a man; but he was most conspicuously great in that particular excellence, which, in all ages and in all nations, has been invariably the characteristic distinction of the greatest of mankind—he was pre-eminently a lady's man. The following pages will show, but faintly, feebly, and imperfectly, I fear, that he was uniformly the chosen favourite of the charming sex. The moment he entered a house, he inspired the most lively interest into every woman in the family; not only the mistress of the house, her daughters, and other lady relatives, but even the housekeeper and the humblest females in the establishment were animated alike by an active desire to promote and secure his well-being, in every way and to the utmost in their power. In England women have never had too much influence in advancing the fortunes of men; commonly too little, far too little, for the public welfare. It was always a maxim in France, and a wise one, that no man could succeed

greatly in life who was not a favourite with the fair. The young Poet's fortunes would certainly have been less rude—they would have been mitigated, and softened, and brightened, if a due preponderance had been conceded to the gentle and humanising patronage and fond devotion of his countless lady friends.

To "amend" the "Shelley Papers," to restore them, as nearly as possible to their original condition, as they were written by myself, and as they stood before they underwent editorial censorship, was long my intention; but many hero-worshippers have informed me, that they desire to procure a copy of the identical sketches, which they had formerly viewed with satisfaction, and which were almost inaccessible to purchasers, being embedded and walled in, as it were, in the body of a voluminous periodical. One meritorious worshipper of singular industry, a citizen of the United States of America, assures me that "he copied them in manuscript, that he might possess them, and lend them to his friends." Accordingly, I yielded, but not without reluctance, to their request, and the "Shelley Papers" will be reprinted here precisely as they appeared in the year 1832, in the "New Monthly Magazine." They will be found entire and un-

altered in the First Volume of this Work, from p. 48 to p. 135, and from p. 203 to p. 286. All Shelley's journals, letters, fragments, every scrap of paper, indeed, relating to him, or to his affairs, whether it was written by himself, or by other persons, have been placed in my hands and at my disposal by his family; my materials are at once authentic and abundant. This is much, but it will be far more, to write a living Life of the young Poet; to give of him a breathing, moving, speaking portrait.

It is especially my desire to present a pleasing picture; but in this particular some explanation, some qualification is necessary. How will he, or she, or they, like his statements? is not the question which a biographer should ask himself; the question really being, How ought they to like them? what can they fairly and reasonably expect from him? It is his duty to seek to please; not simply, unconditionally, generally, and in every way to please; but to please so far only, and in such a manner as a judicious and impartial reader ought to be pleased.

I have been informed after these volumes went to the press, that a large box has been found, containing many letters, journals, and other papers of great curiosity and value. They relate, I believe, to a subsequent period of Shelley's life. They will

be carefully perused, and whatever is of interest and importance will be presented hereafter in due course and chronological order.

The following letter is so interesting, and so much to the present purpose, that it ought not to be withheld, or even postponed to the period to which it relates :—

March 9, 1826.

My Dear Madam,

I saw W. this morning. He says he will write to me when he knows what to do. He has given me no promise. He says Sir T. is much annoyed by the name being brought before the public in the paragraphs respecting your novel. I have little doubt, however, that you will get the money; but I think you will be punished by a short delay.

I told W. that your name was not in the title-page, and that its being brought forward at all was the fault of the publisher, and very contrary to your wishes. I told him he must remember that you were solitary and dependent; and that employing your time according to your tastes and talents, with a view to better your condition, was what no one could reasonably condemn. This he acknowledged; but said the name was the matter: it annoyed Sir T.

Yours ever faithfully,

To Mrs. Shelley. L. T.

Not only did Sir Timothy Shelley interdict, as has been shown, by his threat of "stopping the supplies," the pious office upon which his cruelly bereaved daughter-in-law had set her heart, of composing a full and faithful biography of her "late espoused saint," but he endeavoured to prevent, by actually stopping them, all authorship; and altogether to preclude the exercise of her unequalled talents. This attempt, which many will condemn as strangely barbarous and utterly barbarian, was happily unsuccessful.

One of Mrs. Shelley's admirable novels, it seems, the date points out her wonderful invention, "The Last Man," had been advertised by the publisher in her name—a name that had already attained sufficient celebrity to insure the sale of any work to which it was prefixed, and thereupon her scanty stipend was immediately withdrawn. "The supplies," to the payment of which such hard conditions—conditions so hurtful to the interests of literature—were annexed, it is right to state, were not freely given by the father of her lost husband to support, in decent competence, the widow of his eldest son and the mother of the heir to his name, title, and estates. They were money lent to her on the strength of her expectations, and the security of

her bond, to be repaid, and if I mistake not, with interest. The money was duly repaid; and I regret to add—it has been received. For farther proof of a constant and abiding hostility to all intellectual efforts, I have been referred to in a passage in a letter from myself to Mrs. Shelley, of August 22nd, 1824. "It gave me great pleasure to hear that Sir Timothy has proposed to purchase Field Place of you; I hope that matters will proceed without interruption, until you find yourself quite at your ease as to pecuniary affairs. The condition for which he stipulated, that 'The Posthumous Works' should be suppressed, is highly characteristic, and forcibly reminds me of old times, when the old Philistine used to make demands equally rational and enlightened."

To return to Shelley—it will be seen that the poor fellow was very unfortunate in his political connections. His own family and their alliances, without exception, were Whigs, devoted adherents of Norfolk House. Never surely were any creatures so senseless, helpless, and hollow as the Buff and Blue faction; mere grievance-mongers, desiring always that he and others should have a great grievance, in order that he with them clamouring about such matters, might help them to office, to serve their own ends; by no means to do him any good, and least

of all to redress his grievance. The few Tories with whom he became personally acquainted, treated him with kindness, and were well disposed to consider all differences of opinion as not unamiable peculiarities, and to throw their ægis over him: but unhappily he was afraid of them. Consequently, he gave himself up too much to people, who have since been called Radicals; these were necessarily vulgar; they dreaded and detested his conspicuously aristocratical and gentlemanlike dispositions, and being commonly needy men, chiefly perhaps because they were lazy and dissipated, they preyed upon him most unmercifully. We Tories were not without our faults towards him, our short-comings towards others, and so we have long ceased to exist. It has sometimes been asked, What is the difference between a Tory and a Conservative? are they not both of the same party? In like manner we may ask, What is the difference between a bull and an ox? are they not both the same animal? An extreme freedom of opinion, or to speak more correctly, of declaration and discussion, together with a taste for chemistry, had been acquired whilst Shelley was a schoolboy, by his intercourse and intimacy with a physician, for whom he long retained a warm regard and a profound reverence. The editor, in

her graceful note on "The Revolt of Islam," informs us, as my friend had already told me, that, "There exists in this poem a memorial of a friend of his youth. The character of the old man who liberates Laon from his tower-prison, and tends on him in sickness, is founded on that of Doctor Lind, who, when Shelley was at Eton, had often stood by to befriend and support him, and whose name he never mentioned without love and veneration." Shelley was desirous to make me acquainted with the medical philosopher; "he will soon remove all your prejudices!" He has not done this, for I never saw Dr. James Lind, of Windsor.

Whether the pupil corresponded with his early preceptor after he left Eton, I know not; I never saw any letters from the sage, or heard that any had been received. Having carefully inoculated his young patient and satisfied himself that the disease had taken, it should seem that he left him to his fate.

In the ancient world, the sacrilegious impiety of one who had disclosed the Eleusinian mysteries, must be expiated by his death. It was not prudent to sit under the same roof-tree, or to embark in the same boat, with a man who, notwithstanding that a golden key had come upon his tongue, had divulged

the sacred secrets of Ceres: so fiercely was the wrath of the immortal gods kindled against him. Thus, in our degenerate days, is a solemn and sagacious reviewer, who possibly may have his private reasons for disliking disclosures, inflamed against some too communicative biographer, for having rashly revealed, that Cottle once lent his tea-kettle and toasting-fork to Coleridge. With all gravity the critic dogmatically affirms, that "sacred silence should be thrown around such facts, through an exquisite delicacy of mind," and so forth. The names of illustrious heroes are written among the stars; their history, in the heavens, to be read by all; their acts, words, and thoughts belong not to their families and private friends,—not even to their needy pensioners, however worthless,—but to their worshippers, to the public, and to posterity. Nevertheless, I have endeavoured, as far as it was practicable, to spare the feelings of others, and to avoid compromising them by naming them in any delicate conjuncture, without absolute and unavoidable necessity. Many obliging persons have kindly offered me information and assistance, and I trust that they will do me the justice to believe, that want of leisure alone prevented a due acknowledgment of their favour, and well-merited thanks.

A great deal of nonsense has been written and spoken about the irreligious opinions ascribed to my poor friend. In metaphysical discussions, he was uniformly and eminently bold and uncompromising. I will not venture to engage in theological disquisitions, for which I have neither inclination nor ability, but I will at once dispose of the matter by simply asking one very plain question. Did any body ever know a poet—and Shelley was a truly great Poët—who was an irreligious man? Let us consider the immortality of the soul and a future state as subjects of feeling, not of reasoning; of feeling imprinted and rooted in us for the wisest purposes, and far more conclusive than any reasoning; and we may readily get rid of all controversy by asking, in like manner, Does any one who knew Shelley, believe that he has ceased to exist,—that he is really dead,—that we shall never see him more? If it shall appear in the course of my narrative, that the young Poet's heart ever went astray, I will neither condemn, nor justify, its wanderings; I will only observe, with Mister John Boccaccio, late of Florence: "Love can do much more, dear Reader, than either you, or I, can do!"

April, 1858.

THE LIFE

OF

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

CHAPTER I.

"Have I forgot the words?
Faith! they are sadder than I thought they were."

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY was born at Field Place, near Horsham, in the county of Sussex, on Saturday, the 4th of August, 1792.

"Saturday's moon comes a day too soon," says the proverb; the new moon, which falls on a Saturday, misses by one day the good luck that ought to befall us, when the conjunction of our satellite with the sun takes place on a Sunday. Thus by coming one day too early into a world that knew him not, did the Divine Poet want all the good fortune, which is the portion of a Sunday child. Temporal advantages, worldly prosperity, ephemeral joys, fading honours were not for him; but the undying

laurel, the amaranthine garland, the golden crown were his: the crown of glory, that passeth not away. The royal ornaments, which of right adorn a king of song, were his noble inheritance, of this he can never be despoiled; for—

> "Not all the water in the rough rude sea
> Can wash the balm from an anointed king."

The science of the astrologer must be vain indeed, if the horoscope of the "heaven-born child," as far as regards all the higher blessings, all real good gifts, was not favourable and flattering.

His father—to return for a while to plain facts—was Timothy Shelley; his mother, a lady of rare beauty, Elizabeth, the daughter of Charles Pilfold, Esquire. They were married in the year 1791, and of this union their eldest son, Percy Bysshe, was the first child. The poet had four sisters; Elizabeth, Mary, Hellen, and Margaret, all of whom lived to be distinguished for remarkable beauty, so that it was frequently observed, "very few families indeed can boast four such handsome girls!" He had only one brother, John, the youngest child.

Other members of the family will sometimes of necessity be mentioned incidentally; but where the subject of biography is alone and of himself sufficient to ennoble a house, and by his immortal reputation to render it for ever illustrious, trifling

details concerning inferior honours would be improper and impertinent. Moreover, it would be foreign to the true purpose of the present narrative to compose a genealogical history of an ancient and honourable family. To tell how Sir Guyon de Shelley, one of the most famous of the Paladins, made himself glorious. How he carried about with him at all times three conchs fastened to the inside of his shield, tipt respectively with brass, with silver, and with gold. When he blew the first shell, all giants, however huge, fled before him. When he put the second to his lips, all spells were broken, all enchantments dissolved; and when he made the third conch, the golden one, vocal, the law of God was immediately exalted, and the law of the Devil annulled and abrogated, wherever the potent sound reached. Some historians affirm, that the third shell had a still more remarkable effect; that its melting notes instantly softened the heart of every female, gentle or simple, who heard them, to such an extent, that it was impossible for her to refuse whatever its owner might ask. This power was dangerous indeed; but a knight *sans peur* could find delight only in the society of a lady *sans tache;* in the pure ages of chivalry, therefore, nothing derogatory to the limpid honour of knights or dames would ever be required. It is certain, that history has not recorded, that the good Sir Guyon

ever abused the irresistible potency of his golden horn. These wondrous conchs, or shells, are still remembered in the name, and borne in the arms, of the several branches of the house of Shelley. Sir Guyon, we are told, was the personal friend, as well as the companion in arms, of Orlando, notwithstanding the well-known attachment of the fair Angelica for the lord of shells; but if the beauty of Sir Guyon was transcendent, superhuman, and indeed divine, his continence, chastity, purity, and unsullied, knight-like honour, as the Archbishop of Rheims, Turpin, (who is never in error), affirms, were such, that there could be no place for jealousy between the gallant friends.

Carlovingian families contemn the Crusaders as frigid imitators of heroic gestes, as a degenerate race, but persons, who do not affect to trace their own lineage so high as the eighth century, may still be permitted to admire the pious devotion and exalted courage of the Champions of the Cross. Passing over, however, the period of the Crusades, we read in times comparatively modern, in the sixteenth century, of Sir Richard Shelley, a knight of Malta, and Grand Prior of the English Language, as being remarkable, not only for bravery, which was the common attribute of the Order, and consequently no peculiar distinction, but for disinterested generosity. Bosio, the secretary and historian of

the Knights of St. John, has recorded, that notwithstanding his extreme old age, which would have fully excused his attendance, he came to the support and relief of the Island of Malta, when it was besieged by the Turks, A.D. 1565.

When one of the family visited Malta lately, he was informed there, that they were unable to find the bones of the Grand Prior, Sir Richard Shelley: with what object they sought for them was not stated.

Of the earliest infancy, the babyhood, of the wonderful child we know nothing. As a boy he was gentle, affectionate, intelligent, amiable; ever loving, and universally beloved.

His relatives have supplied interesting details. To give these just as they were received, will be a better illustration of the truth of things than a re-arrangement and classification of facts would afford.

Nov. 26th, 1856.

MY DEAREST J.,

After reading the reminiscences of our Poet Brother in the periodical you lent me, a strong wish arose in my mind to add, even in the trifling degree, which lies in my power, to the scanty details of his outward life. The absurd and imaginary view of Bysshe's character, and the facts, which are suffi-

cient to contradict the fables contained in some books, have been uncontradicted only, I imagine, from the feeling that reasonable persons could perceive, that a child—who, at six years old, was sent daily to learn Latin at a clergyman's house, and as soon as it was expedient removed to Dr. Greenland's, from thence to Eton, and subsequently to college—could scarcely have been the *uneducated* son, that some writers would endeavour to persuade those, who read their books, to believe he ought to have been, if his parents despised education. Such books are altogether written with bad feeling,—the petty malice of a little mind avenging itself for slights too well deserved to be forgiven. My knowledge of these publications is not vivid enough to dissect the contents; but I recollect when they first appeared we were urged to write a contradiction of the most glaring mistakes,—but who would willingly go to war with a petty state? Time, generally, elicits truth, and there are many friends of our family, that could indignantly repel the reflections cast upon those, who treat them with silent contempt. I will write again soon.

Yours always,

HELLEN SHELLEY.

MY DEAREST J.,

At this distant period I can scarcely re-

member my *first* impressions of Bysshe, but he would frequently come to the nursery and was full of a peculiar kind of pranks. One piece of mischief, for which he was rebuked, was running a stick through the ceiling of a low passage to find some new chamber, which could be made effective for some flights of his vivid imagination. The tales, to which we have sat and listened, evening after evening, seated on his knee, when we came to the dining-room for dessert, were anticipated with that pleasing dread, which so excites the minds of children, and fastens so strongly and indelibly on the memory. There was a spacious garret under the roof of Field Place, and a room, which had been closed for years, excepting an entrance made by the removal of a board in the garret-floor. This unknown land was made the fancied habitation of an Alchemist, old and grey, with a long beard. Books and a lamp, with all the attributes of a picturesque fancy, were poured into our listening ears. We were to go and see him "some day;" but we were content to wait, and a cave was to be dug in the orchard for the better accommodation of this Cornelius Agrippa. Another favourite theme was the "Great Tortoise," that lived in Warnham Pond; and any unwonted noise was accounted for by the presence of this great beast, which was made into the fanciful proportions most adapted to excite awe and wonder.

[I never heard Shelley mention the "Great Tortoise," but he spoke often of the "Great Old Snake." It was a snake of unusual magnitude, which had inhabited the gardens at Field Placé for several generations, and which, according to tradition, had been known, as the "Old Snake," three hundred years ago. It was killed, accidentally, through the carelessness of the gardener, in mowing the grass: killed by the same fatal instrument with which the universal destroyer, Time, kills every thing besides,—by that two-handed engine, the scythe. There is so strong an affinity between serpents and all imaginative and demoniacal characters, that I cannot but regret to have entirely forgotten the legends of the "Old Snake;" narratives perfectly true, no doubt,—not with the common-place truth of ordinary matters of fact, but with the far higher truth of poetical verity and mythological necessity. —H.] Bysshe was certainly fond of eccentric amusements, but they delighted us, as children, quite as much as if our minds had been naturally attuned to the same tastes; for we dressed ourselves in strange costumes to personate spirits, or fiends, and Bysshe would take a fire-stove and fill it with some inflammable liquid and carry it flaming into the kitchen and to the back-door; but discovery of this dangerous amusement soon put a stop to many repetitions. When my brother commenced his

studies in chemistry, and practised electricity upon us, I confess my pleasure in it was entirely negatived by terror at its effects. Whenever he came to me with his piece of folded brown packing-paper under his arm, and a bit of wire and a bottle (if I remember right) my heart would sink with fear at his approach; but shame kept me silent, and, with as many others as he could collect, we were placed hand-in-hand round the nursery table to be electrified; but when a suggestion was made that chilblains were to be cured by this means, my terror overwhelmed all other feelings, and the expression of it released me from all future annoyance. I have heard that Bysshe's memory was singularly retentive. Even as a little child, Gray's lines on the Cat and the Gold Fish were repeated, word for word, after once reading; a fact I have frequently heard from my mother. He used, at my father's bidding, to repeat long Latin quotations, probably from some drama; for he would act, and the expression of his face and movement of his arms are distinct recollections, though the subject of his declamations was a sealed book to his infant hearers. Poor fellow! Why did he not live fifty years later: when he would have been assisted by the wonderful improvements of the age in directing his gifted and inquisitive mind?—Good-bye, dearest, for to-day.

MY DEAREST JANE,

The tranquillity of our house must have frequently been rudely invaded by experiments, for, on one occasion, on the morning our Poet and experimentalist left home (for Eton, probably), the washing-room was discovered to have been filled with smoke, by a fire in the grate with the valve closed; the absence of draught had probably prevented mischief, but much was made of this accident, probably to deter any admiring imitators; and there might have been circumstances connected with it relating to chemical preparations, which did not reach us. My younger brother, John, was a child in petticoats, when I remember Bysshe playing with him under the fir-trees on the lawn, pushing him gently down to let him rise and beg for a succession of such falls, rolling with laughing glee on the grass; then, as a sequel to this game, the little carriage was drawn through the garden walks at the rate a big boy could draw a little one, and in an unfortunate turn the carriage was upset, and the occupant tossed into the cabbages, or strawberry-bed. Screams, of course, brought sympathetic aid, and, though the child was unhurt, the boy was rebuked; and when the former was brought down after dinner, in the nurse's arms, "Bit," (Bysshe) was apostrophised as a culprit. His great delight was to teach his

infant brother schoolboy words, and his first attempt at his knowledge of the devil, was an innocent "Debbee!"

MY DEAREST JANE,

I feel more confidence in writing when I commence a page, as I have now done; and after having talked over the small things we remember of our brother, I place them on paper without chronological order; for you will readily believe that to me it would be impossible, as I do not remember even seeing him after I was eleven years of age. I went to school before Margaret, so that she recollects how Bysshe came home in the midst of the half-year to be nursed; and when he was allowed to leave the house, he came to the dining-room window, and kissed her through the pane of glass. She remembers his face there, with nose and lips pressed against the window, and at that time she must have been about five years old. In the holidays, he would walk with us, if he could steal away with us; and on one occasion he walked with us through the fields to Strood; where, in those days, there was a park stile, to encourage good neighbourhood: there was a sunk fence to divide the lawn from the meadows, and gates were despised, where difficulty would augment the pleasure; and we were assisted up this per-

pendicular wall. I was big enough to be pulled over, but Margaret was gently thrown across on the grass. Our shoes were sadly soiled, and the little one of the party was tired, and required carrying; but she was to be careful to hold her feet so that the trousers might not be damaged. This trait does not seem characteristic, but it is nevertheless true; and subsequently, Bysshe ordered clothes according to his own fancy at Eton, and the beautifully fitting silk pantaloons, as he stood, as almost all men and boys do, with their coat tails near the fire, excited my silent, though excessive admiration. He must always have been full of imaginative fancies, even before the youthful genius displayed itself in poetry. That wonderful emanation from the brain of a youth of eighteen, Queen Mab, is quite unequalled in gorgeous images and marvellous expression. The free writing down of overflowing thoughts by a boy, where no prudence could be expected; and the peculiar, not to say unfortunate, tendency of that early stroke of undoubted genius, cannot detract from the *poet's* fame, though the wisdom and experience of riper years might have modified the poem, as well as his whole after-life. His early death left him unformed; but who can tell what were the thoughts of one, who had but a few minutes of preparation between this world and the next. It may be (and,

oh, that it might be prophecy!) that Love and Mercy took into account the temptations and dangers of a mind almost alone in its peculiar nature, and opened his eyes to that belief, without which he had better never been born!

MY DEAREST JANE,

I meant in my last letter to have given you an illustration of Bysshe's boyish traits of imagination, but flew off to a later period. On one occasion he gave the most minute details of a visit he had paid to some ladies, with whom he was acquainted at our village: he described their reception of him, their occupations, and the wandering in their pretty garden, where there was a well-remembered filbert-walk and an undulating turf-bank, the delight of our morning visit. There must have been something peculiar in this little event, for I have often heard it mentioned as a singular fact, and it was ascertained almost immediately, that the boy had never been to the house. It was not considered as a falsehood to be punished; but, I imagine, his conduct altogether must have been so little understood, and unlike that of the generality of children, that these tales were left unnoticed. He was, at a later period, in the habit of walking out at night, and the prosaic minds of ordinary mortals could not understand the pleasure to be

derived from contemplating the stars, when he probably was repeating to himself lines, which were so soon to astonish those, who looked on him as a boy. The old servant of the family would follow him, and say, that "Master Bysshe only took a walk, and came back again." He was full of cheerful fun, and had all the comic vein so agreeable in a household: details of this kind would be trifling in many instances: but, as a child at school, I remember some verses, that were sent by him to one of my elder sisters, illustrating something unfavourable to a French teacher, who was accused of being fond of those pupils, who could supply her with fruit and cakes. I believe it was clever, for the sisters were proud enough of it to be imprudent, and by some means it became known to *Madame*, and I can just remember the commotion it made and the "very bold boy our *broder* must be." I have somewhere in my possession a very early effusion of Bysshe's, with a cat painted on the top of the sheet, I will try and find it; but there is no promise of future excellence in the lines, the versification is defective. At one time, he, with my eldest sister, wrote a play secretly, and sent it to Matthews, the comedian; who, after a time, returned it, with the opinion, that it would not do for acting. I wonder, whether Matthews knew the age of the boy and girl, who ventured upon writing a play. The subject was

never known to me; and most likely, the youthful authors made a good blaze with the MS.

MY DEAREST JANE,

Every one has heard of Mrs. Hemans, if they have not read her poetry. She published a large volume, when quite a girl and Miss Browne. Early talent attracted Bysshe's admiration and sympathy: he wrote to Miss Felicia Dorothea Browne, and he received an answer, but it was to an effect which gave no encouragement to farther correspondence: and he was probably disappointed, as all young, ardent, and admiring spirits would be in such a case. He fancied that I might, with encouragement, write verses, and his first lesson to me, I perfectly remember. Monk Lewis's Poems had a great attraction for him, and any tale of spirits, fiends, &c., seemed congenial to his taste at an early age. I was so young, that I really can remember nothing of the verses I made, farther than to give you as a sample of them :—

> "There was an old woman, as I have heard say,
> Who worked metamorphoses every day."

—and these two lines are probably left in my memory, because Bysshe expressed so much astonishment at my knowledge of the word *metamorphoses*. There were several short poems, I think,

of which he gave me the subject; and one line about "an old woman in her bony gown," (even the rhyme to which line I forget), elicited the praise for which I wrote. Subsequently he had them printed, and a mistake I made about sending one of my heroes, or heroines, out by night and day in the same stanza, he would not alter, but excused it by quoting something from Shakespeare. When I saw my name in the title-page "H—ll—n Sh—ll—y," I felt much more frightened than pleased, and as soon as the publication was seen by my superiors, it was bought up and destroyed. I should not think there could have been anything in it worth either keeping, or destroying, but it will tend to show, that my brother was full of pleasant attention to children, though his mind was so far above theirs. He had a wish to educate some child, and often talked seriously of purchasing a little girl for that purpose: a tumbler, who came to the back door to display her wonderful feats, attracted him, and he thought she would be a good subject for the purpose, but all these wild fancies came to nought. He would take his pony and ride about the beautiful lanes and fields surrounding the house, and would *talk* of his intention, but he did not consider that board and lodging would be indispensable, and this difficulty, probably, was quite sufficient to prevent the talk from becoming reality.

MY DEAREST JANE,

I think you have heard me mention a few things concerning Bysshe, which may only be interesting to you, and me, and two or three others; for when I write about him, whose poems and writings, and attainments, which were never known to the world in all their wonderful profusion, I feel that *my* anecdotes are scarcely indicative of his character; but you remember that my knowledge of Bysshe ended at ten years of age, and probably the last time I saw him was at Clapham, where we were at school, and he came occasionally to see us, and ask questions about our comfort. One day his ire was greatly excited at a black mark hung round one of our throats, as a penalty for some small misdemeanour. He expressed great disapprobation, more of the system than that one of his sisters should be so punished. Another time he found me, I think, in an iron collar, which certainly was a dreadful instrument of torture in my opinion. It was not worn as a punishment, but because I *poked*; but Bysshe declared it would make me grow crooked, and ought to be discontinued immediately. The old lady who kept the school, would not, I believe, have hurt one of her pupils for any amount of approbation, so that she was not likely to continue an objectionable practice, if boldly disapproved of, and I was released forthwith.

He came once with the elders of the family, and Harriet Grove, his early love, was of the party: how fresh and pretty she was! Her assistance was invoked to keep the wild boy quiet, for he was full of pranks, and upset the port wine on the tray cloth, for our schoolmistress was hospitable, and had offered refreshments; then we all walked in the garden, and there was much ado to calm the spirits of the wild boy. His disappointment a few years afterwards, in losing the lady of his love, had a great effect upon him; and my eldest sister has frequently told me how narrowly she used to watch him and accompany him in his walks with his dog and gun. I believe this matter has been discussed amongst others, probably with little knowledge of the truth. It was not put an end to by *mutual* consent; but both parties were very young, and her father did not think the marriage would be for his daughter's happiness. He, however, with truly honourable feeling, would not have persisted in his objection, if his daughter had considered herself bound by a promise to my brother, but this was not the case, and time healed the wound, by means of another Harriet, whose name and similar complexion, perhaps, attracted the attention of my brother. I do not consider any details of a later date would be in my province, for I only know his history as I have been told it.

MY DEAREST JANE,

I began my last letter intending to tell you of a morning's event. As we were sitting in the little breakfast-room our eyes were attracted by a countryman passing the window with a truss of hay on a prong over his shoulders; the intruder was wondered at and called after, when it was discovered that Bysshe had put himself in costume to take some hay to a young lady at Horsham, who was advised to use hay-tea for chilblains. When visitors were announced during his visit to the vicar's daughter, he concealed himself under the table, but the concealment did not probably last long. We have lately been on a visit to Cuckfield Park, and it was singular enough that our host, without having heard this story, mentioned his single recollection of having once, when quite a little boy, seen Bysshe, who came to his uncle, Colonel Sergison, whilst on a visit to his lawyer in Horsham, and asked, in Sussex language, to be hired as gamekeeper's boy. My informant thought his suit was successful, and then, of course, there was an explosion of laughter. I remember *incidents*, but nothing that either preceded or followed them, connectedly. My reminiscences must necessarily be limited to a few early years, for the tales of others, with regard to my brother, do not appear to me truthful. I read of his discordant voice and stooping figure, and I think

excitement, in one case, and deep thinking in another, might have made this true in a measure; but, as I remember Bysshe, his figure was slight and beautiful,—his hands were models, and his feet are treading the earth again in one of his race; his eyes, too, have descended in their wild, fixed beauty to the same person. As a child, I have heard that his skin was like snow, and bright ringlets covered his head. He was, I have heard, a beautiful boy. His old nurse lived, within the last two or three years, at Horsham. One of the curates there—a Mr. Du Barry—was a great admirer of my brother's poetry, and we were able, through him, to remind her of those years, when she used to come regularly every Christmas to Field Place, to receive a substantial proof that she was not to be forgotten, though her nurse-child was gone from earth, for ever.

My dearest Jane,

I have just found the lines which I mentioned; a child's effusion about some cat, which evidently *had* a story, but it must have been before I can remember. It is in Elizabeth's hand-writing, copied probably later than the composition of the lines, though the hand-writing is unformed. It seems to be a tabby cat, for it has an indistinct, brownish-gray coat.

I have not painted it for you :—

A cat in distress,
Nothing more, nor less ;
Good folks, I must faithfully tell ye,
As I am a sinner,
It waits for some dinner
To stuff out its own little belly.

You would not easily guess
All the modes of distress
Which torture the tenants of earth ;
And the various evils,
Which like so many devils,
Attend the poor souls from their birth.

Some a living require,
And others desire
An old fellow out of the way ;
And which is the best
I leave to be guessed,
For I cannot pretend to say.

One wants society,
Another variety,
Others a tranquil life ;
Some want food,
Others, as good,
Only want a wife.

But this poor little cat
Only wanted a rat,
To stuff out its own little maw ;
And it were as good
Some people had such food,
To make them *hold their jaw !*

That last expression is, I imagine, still *classical* at boys' schools, and it was a favourite one of Bysshe's, which I remember from a painful fact,

that one of my sisters ventured to make use of it, and was punished in some old-fashioned way, which impressed the sentence on my memory.

HELLEN.

At ten years of age Shelley was sent to Sion House, Brentford. In walking with him to Bishopsgate from London, he pointed out to me, more than once, a gloomy brick-house, as being this school. He spoke of the master, Dr. Greenlaw, not without respect, saying, "he was a hard-headed Scotchman, and a man of rather liberal opinions." Of this period of his life he never gave me an account; nor have I heard or read any details, which appeared to bear the impress of truth. How long he remained at Sion House I know not; nor at what age he was removed to Eton. Among his papers is the commencement of an essay on Friendship, written not long before his death; in it he has thus commemorated a youthful attachment. Whether the school was Sion House, or Eton, does not appear. His age of eleven or twelve years agrees better with the former.

FRIENDSHIP.

I once had a friend, whom an inextricable multitude of circumstances has forced me to treat with apparent neglect. To him I dedicate this essay. If he finds my own words condemn me, will he not forgive?

Yes, he has forgiven you! I saw this fragment, for the first time, a few months ago; I listened to the question, as to a voice from another world, heard once more after a silence of thirty-five long years; and I immediately answered it. I thankfully accept the dedication, and I lament that it is only of the following brief fragment:

AN ESSAY ON FRIENDSHIP.

The nature of love and friendship is very little understood, and the distinctions between them ill-established. This latter feeling—at least, a profound and sentimental attachment to one of the same sex, often precedes the former. It is not right to say, merely, that friendship is exempt from the smallest alloy of sensuality. It rejects, with disdain, all thoughts but those of an elevated and imaginative character. I remember forming an attachment of this kind at school. I cannot recal to my memory the precise epoch at which this took place; but I imagine it must have been at the age of eleven or twelve.

The object of these sentiments was a boy about my own age, of a character eminently generous, brave and gentle; and the elements of human feeling seemed to have been, from his birth, genially compounded within him. There was a delicacy and a simplicity in his manners, inexpressibly

attractive. It has never been my fortune to meet with him since my schoolboy-days; but either I confound my present recollections with the delusions of past feelings, or he is now a source of honour and utility to every one around him. The tones of his voice were so soft and winning, that every word pierced into my heart; and their pathos was so deep, that in listening to him the tears have involuntarily gushed from my eyes. Such was the being for whom I first experienced the sacred sentiments of friendship. I remember in my simplicity writing to my mother a long account of his admirable qualities and my own devoted attachment. I suppose she thought me out of my wits, for she returned no answer to my letter. I remember we used to walk the whole play-hours up and down by some moss-covered palings, pouring out our hearts in youthful talk. We used to speak of the ladies, with whom we were in love, and I remember that our usual practice was to confirm each other in the everlasting fidelity, in which we had bound ourselves towards them, and towards each other. I recollect thinking my friend exquisitely beautiful. Every night, when we parted to go to bed, we kissed each other like children, as we still were!

CHAPTER II.

MY DEAREST JANE,

I had no conception that Bysshe's marriage with Harriet Westbrook would have elicited the quotation in Charles G——'s letter, which proves he was sacrificing himself to a point of honour. You will perceive that C. G. had no unpleasant recollections of harsh voice, &c., which I cannot help thinking must have been noticeable only when the boy was entering manhood.

I remember well how he used to sing to us; he could not bear any turns or twists in music, but liked a tune played quite simply.

About Miss Westbrook; I recollect hearing Bysshe married her, because her name was Harriet. She was not a person likely to attach him permanently; I remember her well; a very handsome girl, with a complexion quite unknown in these days —brilliant in pink and white—with hair quite like a poet's dream, and Bysshe's peculiar admiration.

I should not remember many of her contemporaries, but the governess and teachers used to remark

upon her beauty; and once I heard them talking together of a possible Fête Champêtre, and Harriet Westbrook might enact Venus.

The engraved portraits of Bysshe, which have hitherto been published, are frightful pictures for a spiritual-looking being, like the poet. Yet I do not expect that my ideal will ever be created, because he must have altered from boy to man. His forehead was white, the eyes deep blue,—darker than John's. He had an eccentric quantity of hair, in those days, when he came by stealth to Field Place; and Elizabeth, on one occasion, made him sit down to have it cut, and be made to look like a Christian. His good temper was a pleasant memory always, and I do not recollect an instance of the reverse towards any of us. I tell you little things as they pass in my mind, and you had better tear them off and paste them in the book, for I find a difficulty in recalling far-off memories, when I set about it as a task, however palatable the task may be. There is no life which could bear the test of a detective, and Bysshe's faults and feelings were all laid bare by a too great moral courage, which made him witness against himself, when the rest of his fellow-men conceal their failings, and set their virtues only upon high; for we are all erring mortals.

HELLEN.

Let us next write of the immortal dead, whilst he

was at Eton. And—oh! let us write of him with a tender sadness, as a dove would write about his lost mate; and why may not a dove write with a pen drawn painfully from his own wing? Of the testimonies relating to this period of his life, the first place is, for many reasons, due to that of Mrs. Shelley. Mary tells us that:—

On being placed at Eton, Shelley had to undergo aggravated miseries from his systematic and determined resistance to that law of a public school, denominated fagging. It were long to discuss the merits of the question now. To show how the most obedient fags become the worst tyrants; or how it is detrimental to the disposition, both of the elder and the younger boys: of the one, that they should capriciously command; of the other, that they should slavishly and fearfully obey. Shelley would never obey. And this incapacity on his part was the cause of whatever persecutions might attend him, both at school and in his future life. This disposition, which is made only more impregnable the greater the force that is employed against it, is much feared and disliked among men; and it is agreed, that such has been the characteristic of the most vicious among our species. But there is this striking distinction between the worst and the best, when they are actuated by this impulse. The bad man follows his own will, governed by none; the good person, whose

mind is yet deeply imbued by independence, is to be led—even as an infant to the mother's breast—by affection and reason. And Shelley, from the sensibility of his nature, and the forwardness of his understanding, was peculiarly susceptible of both these modes of government. There is also another line to be drawn between the vicious and the good in these circumstances, which is, the mode in which they employ their liberty. The most rigid censor could hardly have found fault with Shelley's. His heart was set on the acquirement of knowledge, and his time was spent in that exercise. At the very time that he neglected the rules of school-attendance, he translated half of Pliny's Natural History into English. His money was employed, either in purposes of benevolence, or in the purchase of books, or instruments.

I do not give him as an example for children to follow. Away with this cant of schoolboy reproving. I describe, and as far as in me lies unfold the secrets of a human heart; and, if I be true to nature, I depict an uprightness of purpose, a generosity of sentiment, and a sweetness of disposition, that yielded not to the devil of hate, but to the god of love, unequalled by any human being that ever existed. Tamed by affection, but unconquered by blows, what chance was there that Shelley should be happy at a public school?

Affection does not enter in the head-master's code of laws; kindness is too troublesome a mode of discipline, and fear is a short way of enchaining a multitude.

One is glad when we can bring our pretended moralists to a forced acquiescence. What is it that in spite of all his worth, still always gives an air of the ridiculous to the character of a schoolmaster? Think you that it would be so, if his heart and soul were engaged in forming perfect human beings from the little embryos placed under his care; or, if beloved by his pupils, studying their dispositions, imbuing them with virtue by the force of reason only; winding them to his purpose by the resistless power of superior wisdom? Oh, no! look at the picture of the schoolmaster. Is it the paternal care that his countenance expresses? the thoughtful, yet deep-felt, affection that causes his eyes to beam? the lessons of virtue, dropping, like honey, from his tongue? the gentle remonstrance? the firm yet angerless resistance to the freaks of his little flock? Are these what cause a smile of contempt? No. Look at him. His frowning brow; the rod uplifted in one hand; the book, the fatal, incomprehensible book, in the other; the slave, that cowed, fearful, and stammering, stands before him,—his cheek already tingling with the expected blow! This is no caricature of

a schoolmaster; such is the picture universally acknowledged as his prototype, and you dare to inculpate the angelic nature of Shelley, because he bent not his back to this autocrat!

Inasmuch as a lady, however clever and well-informed, cannot attain to an accurate comprehension of the manners and morals of a public school, exaggeration and inaccuracy may be pardoned. I will not pretend to decide the great question, as to the expediency of a well-regulated system of fagging; I have sometimes ventured to discuss it with my animated and eloquent friend; and I must confess, that I still think that something may be said in favour of the old practice. For my own part, I learned as a fag, how to do many very useful things. To make a bed, to brush a hat and clothes; to clean knives and forks, and plates, and shoes and boots, in particular; to set a good polish on the last with a moderate consumption of blacking. To roast potatoes, chesnuts, and the like; to boil an egg; to make coffee, toast, and other good things; to put on buttons, sew up a seam, and in one word, to make myself generally useful. This salutary exercise of humble faculties did me no sort of harm; on the contrary, it was eminently serviceable in after-life. "I was a dutiful fag, but I am no more a slave, Shelley, than yourself; and from my servile submission

to this so-called tyranny, it is quite certain that my aristocratical feelings took no detriment. Whilst I was still a fag, a boy at school, whom I had offended, said to me one day: 'People say, as proud as Lucifer; but I say, if Lucifer were only half as proud as you are, he would have something to be proud of!'" Shelley sometimes reminded me of the boy's sally, and he would add: "How I wish I could be fastidious and exclusive as you are; but I cannot. I fear it is not in my nature to be so!" But to return to Mrs. Shelley's testimonies.

While at Eton he formed several sincere friendships; although disliked by the masters, and hated by his superiors in age, he was adored by his equals. He was all passion,—passionate in his resistance to injury, passionate in his love. Kindness could win his whole soul, and the idea of self never for a moment tarnished the purity of his sentiments.

He became intimate, also, at Eton, with a man whom he never mentioned, except in terms of the tenderest respect. This was Dr. Lind, a name well known among the professors of medical science. "This man," he has often said, "is exactly what an old man ought to be. Free, calm-spirited, full of benevolence, and even of youthful ardour; his eye seemed to burn with supernatural spirit beneath his brow, shaded by his venerable white locks; he

was tall, vigorous, and healthy in his body; tempered, as it had ever been, by his amiable mind. I owe to that man far, ah! far more than I owe to my father; he loved me, and I shall never forget our long talks, where he breathed the spirit of the kindest tolerance and the purest wisdom. Once, when I was very ill during the holidays, as I was recovering from a fever which had attacked my brain, a servant overheard my father consult about sending me to a private madhouse. I was a favourite among all our servants, so this fellow came and told me as I lay sick in bed. My horror was beyond words, and I might soon have been mad indeed, if they had proceeded in their iniquitous plan. I had one hope. I was master of three pounds in money, and, with the servant's help, I contrived to send an express to Dr. Lind. He came, and I shall never forget his manner on that occasion. His profession gave him authority; his love for me ardour. He dared my father to execute his purpose, and his menaces had the desired effect."

I relate this in my Shelley's words, for I well remember them. I well remember where they were spoken; it was that night that decided my destiny; when he opened at first with the confidence of friendship, and then with the ardour of love, his whole heart to me.

Of Dr. Lind more will be told hereafter. I have heard Shelley speak of his fever and this scene at Field Place more than once, in nearly the same terms as Mrs. Shelley adopts. It appeared to myself, and to others also, that his recollections were those of a person not quite recovered from a fever, which had attacked his brain, and still disturbed by the horrors of the disease. Truth and justice demand that no event of his life should be kept back, but that all the materials for the formation of a correct judgment should be freely given.

Amongst his other self-sought studies, he was passionately attached to the study of what used to be called the occult sciences, conjointly with that of the new wonders, which chemistry and natural philosophy have displayed to us. His pocket-money was spent in the purchase of books relative to these darling pursuits,—of chemical apparatus and materials. The books consisted of treatises on magic and witchcraft, as well as those more modern ones detailing the miracles of electricity and galvanism. Sometimes he watched the livelong nights for ghosts. At his father's house, where his influence was, of course, great among the dependants, he even planned how he might get admission to the vault, or charnel-house, at Warnham Church, and might sit there all night, harrowed by fear, yet trembling with expectation, to see one of the

spiritualised owners of the bones piled around him. He consulted his books, how to raise a ghost; and once, at midnight,—he was then at Eton,—he stole from his Dame's house, and, quitting the town, crossed the fields towards a running stream. As he walked along the pathway amidst the long grass, he heard it rustle behind him; he dared not look back; he felt convinced that the devil followed him; he walked fast, and held tight the skull, the prescribed assistant of his incantations.

When he had crossed the field he felt less fearful, for the grass no longer rustled, so the devil no longer followed him. He came to some of the many beautiful clear streams near Eton, and sought for one which he could bestride Colossus-like;* then, standing thus, he repeated his charm, and drank thrice from the skull. No ghost appeared, but for the credit of glamour-books, he did not doubt that the incantation failed from some mistake of his own. It was useless to repeat it that night. Very probably the human skull was wanting, a tumbler, or mug supplying its place, but inadequately, and therefore the youthful enchanter was baffled.

It is sometimes in my power to illustrate the life

* No devil, ghost, or spirit, can cross running water (this superstition may have some reference to the rite of baptism); it is prudent, therefore, in all dealings with demons, to have a running stream at hand.

of Shelley by parallel passages drawn from my own. I passed three or four years at a preparatory school in Yorkshire, near Ferrybridge, where boys remained until they were eleven or twelve years old. I have a lively recollection of several remarkable events that occurred whilst I was there. Among others, of the Peace of Amiens. The treaty was signed on the 27th of March, 1802, and soon afterwards the joyful intelligence reached us. It was one Sunday morning, and, in token of rejoicing, plum-puddings were forthwith ordered for our dinner. When these were placed upon the table at one o'clock,—for, according to the old fashion, we used to begin the meal with pudding,—our master looked upon them complacently, and, standing up, delivered a special grace, which I never heard before or since: "Peace be within her walls, and plenteousness within her palaces!" After dinner we went to church a second time, as usual; and, as usual, we heard a second very long sermon, but on this occasion our master discoursed at length of the great and manifold blessings of peace.

My next recollection has more relation to the sorceries at Eton and Warnham. In the same village was another and a larger school, containing bigger boys. We had a common playground, to which we repaired on half-holidays; at other times we must be content with the run of several large

gardens. This school was only what is called a commercial academy; ours was a classical school. We were accounted young gentlemen, and were so styled, being intended for the learned professions, or being the heirs to landed estates. Our superior station compensated for the more advanced age of the boys, as they were called, of the larger school, and therefore we were perfectly equal, and always agreed very well, being the best friends in the world. The common play-ground was a pleasant grass field of eight or ten acres, watered by several pure streams. One half-holiday, in the summer, I started off for the play-ground the moment dinner was over; I took the shortest way to it, as I was wont, across a garden. The garden was separated from the field by a sunk fence; there was a low wall, and a stream of very clear water flowed along the sunk fence at the foot of the wall. A boy, standing in the field, stopped me, as I was about to take my accustomed leap over the sunk fence.

"Stay where you are, stay where you are; you must not come into the play-ground!"

"Why not?"

"Because they are going to raise the devil; and he cannot hurt you so long as there is a stream of running water between you and him."

"But he will get you when he comes."

"No, he will not; for the moment they have

fairly raised him, I shall clamber over to you, and then I shall be safe too."

He explained how this feat of incantation was to be effected; and I saw several of the bigger boys standing together. They were within a magic circle, into which the devil, it was said, could not enter; and a circle was marked out on the ground. The chief magician was a boy twenty years of age—a full-grown man, indeed. He was a negro, or so nearly one, that I could not have distinguished him from a real negro; and, as such, he was believed to understand perfectly Oby, Fetiches, Taboo, in a word, the whole of the Black Art. A black hat was placed on the ground a short distance without the circle; the Lord's Prayer was to be read thrice backwards, and the black necromancer was to perform other rites, which I do not remember. When these had been duly completed, the devil was to appear under the hat; first, as a crooked black pin. When the hat was lifted up, the pin would turn into a black cat. This, after a while, would become a shaggy black dog; the dog would frisk about a long time, running round and round, and trying often, but in vain, to get within the magic circle. The black dog would slowly grow into a huge black bull, exceedingly fierce, terrible, and dangerous, and with eyes of fire; and finally, the devil would assume his own shape, whatever this

may be. The operations of the African magician seemed to advance but slowly—not at all, indeed. The boys within the circle kept on consulting together. I could not hear their consultations, but they lasted a very long time; and, as far as I could perceive, nothing more was done. At last the negro pulled out his watch—a large silver hunting-watch—and looking at it, said aloud: "In a few minutes we shall have to go in to tea,"—"drinkings," this meal is called in that part of the county of York,—"it will be of no use, lads, raising him to-night!" The rest assented, and here the ceremonies ended.

The boy who stood on the other side of the sunk fence, talking to me all this tedious time, appeared to be alarmed and uneasy: he belonged to the commercial academy.

"It is a great shame raising him! What can they want with him? What is the use of it? What good is he to do? How will they get him laid again? I have a great mind to go and tell our master, that he may come and prevent it."

"Will it not be time enough to go and tell, when they have raised him?"

"No; it will be too late then. I do not suppose the master can do more then, than anybody else. I rather fancy the devil will not mind him a bit."

For my part, I was rather surprised than fright-

ened. I stood still on the wall, because I had been given to understand, that I should certainly be licked, if I entered the play-ground, it being evidently a measure of precaution to keep us out of it; for if the devil, after he was raised, should carry off one of the young gentlemen, the commercial boys would get into great trouble. I had read "Paradise Lost" at that time, not regularly through, but yet almost the whole of it. Jacob Tonson's edition of Milton's poems used always to lie on the table at home, with "Boswell's Life of Johnson," "Tristram Shandy," and some other standard works, in a room where I often sat. Tonson's Milton was a nice book for a boy, for it had plates, in which the devils were represented with handsome long tails. These sporting figures tempted me to read the book, a bit here and a bit there. I understood little of what I read, but I was fully convinced, that I understood enough of the nature of devils to feel quite confident, that such grand, pompous, consequential fellows as they plainly were, would never leave Pandemonium and come up in our common play-ground, merely to gratify the grinning negro and his commercial companions. I often overheard them afterwards consulting about raising the devil; but the consultation invariably terminated by a reference to the large silver hunting-watch, and a farther adjournment. If, then, the blackamoor ever

actually raised the devil, it must have been on some occasion when I was not present.

This was the whole of my experience in the Art Magic, and it is not much; but when I told the tale, such as it is, to Shelley, he listened to it with earnest and eager delight. "Yes, the blacks really understand magic, and often practise it with success. Africa is a most wonderful country! I will see it some day—I will visit it some day—that is certain!" He seemed greatly to desire to know our negro, esteeming him, doubtless, as a most valuable acquaintance, and wishing, probably, to write to him and to make him his friend.

The Quarterly Reviewer, telling a story, partly true and partly false, of his destroying some old trees at Eton with a burning-glass, remarks, that you might foresee the future opponent of superstition and tyranny in the author of this exploit. There is great truth in this observation; and to those acquainted with the early circumstances of Shelley's life, the remark bears still greater force. From his earliest years, all his amusements and occupations were of a daring, and, in one sense of the term, lawless nature. He delighted to exert his powers, not as a boy, but as a man; and so, with manly powers and childish wit, he dared and achieved attempts that none of his comrades could even have conceived. His understanding and

the early development of imagination never permitted him to mingle in childish plays; and his natural aversion to tyranny prevented him from paying due attention to his school duties. But he was always actively employed; and although his endeavours were prosecuted with puerile precipitancy, yet his aim and thoughts were constantly directed to those great objects, which have employed the thoughts of the greatest among men; and though his studies were not followed up according to school discipline, they were not the less diligently applied to.

Enjoying more liberty at Field Place than he possibly could at Eton, that was the chief scene of his experiments. He there possessed an electrical machine, he contrived a galvanic battery, and amused himself by experiments, which might well excite delight and wonder in so ardent a mind.

Here, I regret to say, the brief fragments of biography written by Mrs. Shelley terminate.

To set a large tree on fire by means of an ordinary burning-glass seems to be impossible; and the distance at which this achievement was reported to have been performed made the tale altogether incredible. For some time, therefore, I considered it as fabulous. I have since been informed by Eton men, that an old tree was actually set on fire, but

that the fire was caused by gunpowder, and that the gunpowder was ignited by a lens. If a small quantity of gunpowder were placed in the hollow of an old tree, when it exploded it would doubtless set the dry rotten wood alight; a train might easily be laid from the mine to a distant point, where, with a common burning-glass, the train might be kindled and the mine sprung. This piece of boyish mischief Shelley, they assured me, really executed. It was a very trifling affair, but the fire and explosion were of sufficient magnitude greatly to terrify the timid old gentlewoman, who then presided over the school, and against whose nerves the flaming attack was aimed.

Had the Reviewer, being present on the spot, exclaimed, at the moment the boy's squib burst, "Here is the future opponent of superstition and tyranny; we plainly see him in the author of this exploit, and by the light of his own powder!" he would have gained much credit for his acumen: and had the ingenious critic added: "These are no common crackers, surely; they are the crackers of a divine poet!" it is evident that he would seem to have attained to something of prophetic vein, and might well have passed, not only in Albemarle Street, but wherever the Quarterly Review circulates, for a wise man—a soothsayer.

Shelley had several attached friends at Eton; I

will insert the kind testimonial of one of them, because it is equally creditable to both the friends :—

Glenthorne, *February 27th*, 1857.

My dear Madam,

"Your letter has taken me back to the sunny time of boyhood, "when thought is speech, and speech is truth;" when I was the friend and companion of Shelley at Eton. What brought us together in that small world was, I suppose, kindred feelings, and the predominance of fancy and imagination. Many a long and happy walk have I had with him in the beautiful neighbourhood of dear old Eton. We used to wander for hours about Clewer, Frogmore, the Park at Windsor, the Terrace; and I was a delighted and willing listener to his marvellous stories of fairy-land, and apparitions, and spirits, and haunted ground; and his speculations were then (for his mind was far more developed than mine) of the world beyond the grave. Another of his favourite rambles was Stoke Park, and the picturesque churchyard, where Gray is said to have written his Elegy, of which he was very fond. I was myself far too young to form any estimate of character, but I loved Shelley for his kindliness and affectionate ways: he was not made to endure the rough and boisterous pastime at Eton, and his

shy and gentle nature was glad to escape far away to muse over strange fancies, for his mind was reflective and teeming with deep thought. His lessons were child's play to him, and his power of Latin versification marvellous. I think I remember some long work he had even then commenced, but I never saw it. His love of nature was intense, and the sparkling poetry of his mind shone out of his speaking eye, when he was dwelling on anything good or great. He certainly was not happy at Eton, for his was a disposition that needed especial personal superintendence, to watch, and cherish, and direct all his noble aspirations, and the remarkable tenderness of his heart. He had great moral courage, and feared nothing, but what was base, and false, and low. He never joined in the usual sports of the boys, and, what is remarkable, never went out in a boat on the river. What I have here set down will be of little use to you, but will please you as a sincere, and truthful, and humble tribute to one whose good name was sadly whispered away. Shelley said to me, when leaving Oxford under a cloud: "Halliday, I am come to say good-bye to you, if you are not afraid to be seen with me!" I saw him once again in the autumn of 1814, in London, when he was glad to introduce me to his wife. I think he said, he was just come from Ireland. You have done quite right in applying

to me direct, and I am only sorry that I have no anecdotes, or letters, of that period to furnish.

I am yours truly,

WALTER S. HALLIDAY.

Dr. Keate, the head-master of Eton school, was a short, short-necked, short-legged man; thick-set, powerful, and very active. His countenance resembled that of a bull-dog; the expression was not less sweet and bewitching; his eyes, his nose, and especially his mouth were exactly like that comely and engaging animal; and so were his short, crooked legs. It was said in the school, that old Keate could pin and hold a bull with his teeth. His iron sway was the more unpleasant and shocking, after the long, mild, Saturnian reign of Dr. Goodall, whose temper, character, and conduct corresponded precisely with his name, and under whom Keate had been master of the lower school. Discipline, wholesome and necessary in moderation, was carried by him to an excess; it is reported, that on one morning he flogged eighty boys. Although he was rigid, coarse, and despotical, some affirm that, on the whole, he was not unjust, nor altogether devoid of kindness. His behaviour was accounted vulgar and ungentlemanlike, and therefore he was peculiarly odious to the gentlemen of the school, especially to the refined and aristocratical Shelley. Being uni-

versally unpopular, to torment him was excusable, legitimate, and even commendable. In school, the head-master sate enthroned in a spacious elevated desk, enclosed on all sides, like a pew, with two doors, one on each side. These the boys one morning screwed fast. The Doctor entered the school at eleven o'clock, advanced to his desk, tried to open one door, and found it was fastened. He went round, grinning, growling, and snarling, to the other side; the door there had been secured also. Then, turning furiously to the boys, he said:

"You think to keep me out, eh! You think I cannot get in here, eh! But I will soon show you the difference, eh!"

The desk was as high as the breast of an ordinary man, and as high as the little Doctor's head, but laying his hand on it, he lightly vaulted in. The season was summer; in school old Keate wore a long gown and cassock, and in warm weather, it seemed, nothing under them; for, in his leap, the learned and reverend Doctor displayed not only his agility, but his naked stern, all lower integuments being wanting. The unwonted spectacle was saluted with loud cheers, and a hearty laugh. The mutinous explosion inflamed his wrath to the utmost.

"You shall pay for this, eh! I will make some of you suffer for it, eh!"

However, nothing came of it; the enraged and insulted pedagogue could not discover the offenders. The screws had been bought by two boys, a tall boy and a short one. That was all the detectives could find out.

CHAPTER III.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY AT OXFORD.

WHAT is the greatest disappointment in life? The question has often been asked. In a perfect life, that is to say, in a long course of various disappointments, when the collector has completed the entire set and series, which should he pronounce to be the greatest? What is the greatest disappointment of all? The question has often been asked, and it has received very different answers. Some have said matrimony; others, the accession of an inheritance that had long been anxiously anticipated; others, the attainment of honours; others, the deliverance from an ancient and intolerable nuisance, since a new and more grievous one speedily succeeded to the old. Many solutions have been proposed, and each has been ingeniously supported. At a very early age I had formed a splendid picture of the glories of our two Universities. My father took pleasure in describing his academical career. I listened to him with great delight, and many circum-

stances gave additional force to these first impressions. The clergy,—and in the country they make one's principal guests,—always spoke of these establishments with deep reverence, and of their academical days as the happiest of their lives. When I went to school, my prejudices were strengthened; for the master noticed all deficiencies in learning as being unfit, and every remarkable proficiency as being fit, for the University;—such expressions marked the utmost limits of blame and of praise. Whenever any of the elder boys were translated to college,—and several went thither from our school every year,—the transmission was accompanied with a certain awe. I had always contemplated my own removal with the like feeling; and as the period approached, I anticipated it with a reverent impatience. The appointed day at last arrived, and I set out with a school-fellow, about to enter the same career, and his father. The latter was a dutiful and a most grateful son of *alma mater;* and the conversation of this estimable man, during our long journey, fanned the flame of my young ardour. Such, indeed, had been the effect of his discourse for many years; and as he possessed a complete collection of the Oxford Almanacks, and it had been a great and a frequent gratification to contemplate the engravings at the top of the annual sheets, when I visited his quiet vicarage, I was already familiar

with the aspect of the noble buildings that adorn that famous city. After travelling for several days, we reached the last stage, and soon afterwards approached the point, whence, I was told, we might discern the first glimpse of the metropolis of learning. I strained my eyes to catch a view of that land of promise, for which I had so eagerly longed. The summits of towers, and spires, and domes appeared afar, and faintly; then the prospect was obstructed; by degrees it opened upon us again, and we saw the tall trees that shaded the colleges. At three o'clock on a fine autumnal afternoon we entered the streets of Oxford. Although the weather was cold, we had let down all the windows of our post-chaise, and I sat forward, devouring every object with greedy eyes. Members of the University, of different ages and ranks, were gliding through the quiet streets of the venerable city in academic costume. We devoted two or three days to the careful examination of the various objects of interest that Oxford contains. The eye was gratified; for the external appearance of the University even surpassed the bright picture which my youthful imagination had painted. The outside was always admirable: it was far otherwise with the inside. It is essential to the greatness of a disappointment, that the previous expectation should have been great: nothing could exceed my young anticipations,—nothing could be

more complete than their overthrow. It would be impossible to describe my feelings without speaking harshly and irreverently of the venerable University. On this subject, then, I will only confess my disappointment, and discreetly be silent as to its causes. Whatever those causes, I grew, at least, and I own it cheerfully, soon pleased with Oxford, on the whole; pleased with the beauty of the city, and its gentle river, and the pleasantness of the surrounding country.

Although no great facilities were afforded to the student, there were the same opportunities of *solitary* study as in other places. All the irksome restraints of school were removed, and those of the University are few and trifling. Our fare was good, although not so good, perhaps, as it ought to have been, in return for the enormous cost; and I liked the few companions with whom I most commonly mixed. I continued to lead a life of tranquil, studious, and somewhat melancholy contentment, until the long vacation, which I spent with my family, and, when it expired, I returned to the University.

At the commencement of Michaelmas term, that is, at the end of October, in the year 1810, I happened one day to sit next to a freshman at dinner: it was his first appearance in hall. His figure was slight, and his aspect remarkably youthful, even at our table, where all were very young. He

seemed thoughtful and absent. He ate little, and had no acquaintance with any one. I know not how it was that we fell into conversation, for such familiarity was unusual, and, strange to say, much reserve prevailed in a society where there could not possibly be occasion for any. We have often endeavoured in vain to recollect in what manner our discourse began, and especially by what transition it passed to a subject sufficiently remote from all the associations we were able to trace. The stranger had expressed an enthusiastic admiration for poetical and imaginative works of the German school. I dissented from his criticisms. He upheld the originality of the German writings. I asserted their want of nature.

"What modern literature," said he, "will you compare to theirs?"

I named the Italian. This roused all his impetuosity; and few, as I soon discovered, were more impetuous in argumentative conversation. So eager was our dispute, that when the servants came to clear the tables, we were not aware that we had been left alone. I remarked, that it was time to quit the hall, and I invited the stranger to finish the discussion at my rooms. He eagerly assented. He lost the thread of his discourse in the transit, and the whole of his enthusiasm in the cause of Germany; for as soon as he arrived at my rooms, and

whilst I was lighting the candles, he said calmly, and to my great surprise, that he was not qualified to maintain such a discussion, for he was alike ignorant of Italian and German, and had only read the works of the Germans in translations, and but little of Italian poetry, even at second hand. For my part, I confessed, with an equal ingenuousness, that I knew nothing of German, and but little of Italian; that I had spoken only through others, and like him, had hitherto seen by the glimmering light of translations.

It is upon such scanty data that young men reason; upon such slender materials do they build up their opinions. It may be urged, however, that if they did not discourse freely with each other upon insufficient information,—for such alone can be acquired in the pleasant morning of life, and until they educate themselves,—they would be constrained to observe a perpetual silence, and to forego the numerous advantages that flow from frequent and liberal discussion.

I inquired of the vivacious stranger, as we sat over our wine and dessert, how long he had been at Oxford, how he liked it? He answered my questions with a certain impatience, and, resuming the subject of our discussion, he remarked that, "Whether the literature of Germany, or of Italy, be the more original, or in a purer and more accu-

rate taste, is of little importance, for polite letters are but vain trifling; the study of languages, not only of the modern tongues, but of Latin and Greek also, is merely the study of words and phrases, of the names of things; it matters not how they are called; it is surely far better to investigate things themselves." I inquired, a little bewildered, how this was to be effected? He answered, "through the physical sciences, and especially through chemistry;" and raising his voice, his face flushing as he spoke, he discoursed with a degree of animation, that far outshone his zeal in defence of the Germans, of chemistry and chemical analysis. Concerning that science, then so popular, I had merely a scanty and vulgar knowledge, gathered from elementary books, and the ordinary experiments of popular lecturers. I listened, therefore, in silence to his eloquent disquisition, interposing a few brief questions only, and at long intervals, as to the extent of his own studies and manipulations. As I felt, in truth, but a slight interest in the subject of his conversation, I had leisure to examine, and I may add, to admire, the appearance of my very extraordinary guest. It was a sum of many contradictions. His figure was slight and fragile, and yet his bones and joints were large and strong. He was tall, but he stooped so much, that he seemed of a low stature. His clothes were expensive, and made

according to the most approved mode of the day; but they were tumbled, rumpled, unbrushed. His gestures were abrupt, and sometimes violent, occasionally even awkward, yet more frequently gentle and graceful. His complexion was delicate, and almost feminine, of the purest red and white; yet he was tanned and freckled by exposure to the sun, having passed the autumn, as he said, in shooting. His features, his whole face, and particularly his head, were, in fact, unusually small; yet the last *appeared* of a remarkable bulk, for his hair was long and bushy, and in fits of absence, and in the agonies (if I may use the word) of anxious thought, he often rubbed it fiercely with his hands, or passed his fingers quickly through his locks unconsciously, so that it was singularly wild and rough. In times when it was the mode to imitate stage-coachmen as closely as possible in costume, and when the hair was invariably cropped, like that of our soldiers, this eccentricity was very striking. His features were not symmetrical (the mouth, perhaps, excepted), yet was the effect of the whole extremely powerful. They breathed an animation, a fire, an enthusiasm, a vivid and preternatural intelligence, that I never met with in any other countenance. Nor was the moral expression less beautiful than the intellectual; for there was a softness, a delicacy, a gentleness, and especially (though this will surprise

many) that air of profound religious veneration, that characterises the best works, and chiefly the frescoes (and into these they infused their whole souls), of the great masters of Florence and of Rome. I recognised the very peculiar expression in these wonderful productions long afterwards, and with a satisfaction mingled with much sorrow, for it was after the decease of him in whose countenance I had first observed it. I admired the enthusiasm of my new acquaintance, his ardour in the cause of science, and his thirst for knowledge. I seemed to have found in him all those intellectual qualities which I had vainly expected to meet with in an University. But there was one physical blemish that threatened to neutralise all his excellence. "This is a fine, clever fellow!" I said to myself, "but I can never bear his society; I shall never be able to endure his voice; it would kill me. What a pity it is!" I am very sensible of imperfections, and especially of painful sounds,—and the voice of the stranger was excruciating: it was intolerably shrill, harsh, and discordant; of the most cruel intension,—it was perpetual, and without any remission,—it excoriated the ears. He continued to discourse of chemistry, sometimes sitting, sometimes standing before the fire, and sometimes pacing about the room; and when one of the innumerable clocks that speak in various notes during the day and the

night at Oxford, proclaimed a quarter to seven, he said suddenly that he must go to a lecture on mineralogy, and declared enthusiastically that he expected to derive much pleasure and instruction from it. I am ashamed to own that the cruel voice made me hesitate for a moment; but it was impossible to omit so indispensable a civility—I invited him to return to tea; he gladly assented, promised that he would not be absent long, snatched his cap, hurried out of the room, and I heard his footsteps, as he ran through the silent quadrangle, and afterwards along High-street.

An hour soon elapsed, whilst the table was cleared, and the tea was made, and I again heard the footsteps of one running quickly. My guest suddenly burst into the room, threw down his cap, and as he stood shivering and chafing his hands over the fire, he declared how much he had been disappointed in the lecture. Few persons attended; it was dull and languid, and he was resolved never to go to another.

"I went away, indeed," he added, with an arch look, and in a shrill whisper, coming close to me as he spoke,—"I went away, indeed, before the lecture was finished. I stole away; for it was so stupid, and I was so cold, that my teeth chattered. The Professor saw me, and appeared to be displeased. I thought I could have got out without being

observed; but I struck my knee against a bench, and made a noise, and he looked at me. I am determined that he shall never see me again."

"What did the man talk about?"

"About stones! about stones!" he answered, with a downcast look and in a melancholy tone, as if about to say something excessively profound. "About stones!—stones, stones, stones!—nothing but stones!—and so drily. It was wonderfully tiresome—and stones are not interesting things in themselves!"

We took tea, and soon afterwards had supper, as was usual. He discoursed after supper with as much warmth as before of the wonders of chemistry; of the encouragement that Napoleon afforded to that most important science; of the French chemists and their glorious discoveries; and of the happiness of visiting Paris, and sharing in their fame and their experiments. The voice, however, seemed to me more cruel than ever. He spoke likewise of his own labours and of his apparatus, and starting up suddenly after supper, he proposed that I should go instantly with him to see the galvanic trough. I looked at my watch, and observed that it was too late; that the fire would be out, and the night was cold. He resumed his seat, saying that I might come on the morrow, early, to breakfast, immediately after chapel. He continued to

declaim in his rapturous strain, asserting that chemistry was, in truth, the only science that deserved to be studied. I suggested doubts. I ventured to question the pre-eminence of the science, and even to hesitate in admitting its utility. He described in glowing language some discoveries that had lately been made; but the enthusiastic chemist candidly allowed that they were rather brilliant than useful, asserting, however, that they would soon be applied to purposes of solid advantage.

"Is not the time of by far the larger proportion of the human species," he inquired, with his fervid manner and in his piercing tones, "wholly consumed in severe labour? And is not this devotion of our race—of the whole of our race, I may say (for those who, like ourselves, are indulged with an exemption from the hard lot are so few, in comparison with the rest, that they scarcely deserve to be taken into the account)—absolutely necessary to procure subsistence; so that men have no leisure for recreation or the high improvement of the mind? Yet this incessant toil is still inadequate to procure an abundant supply of the common necessaries of life: some are doomed actually to want them, and many are compelled to be content with an insufficient provision. We know little of the peculiar nature of those substances which are proper for the

nourishment of animals; we are ignorant of the qualities that make them fit for this end. Analysis has advanced so rapidly of late that we may confidently anticipate that we shall soon discover wherein their aptitude really consists; having ascertained the cause, we shall next be able to command it, and to produce at our pleasure the desired effects. It is easy, even in our present state of ignorance, to reduce our ordinary food to carbon, or to lime; a moderate advancement in chemical science will speedily enable us, we may hope, to create, with equal facility, food from substances that appear at present to be as ill adapted to sustain us. What is the cause of the remarkable fertility of some lands, and of the hopeless sterility of others? A spadeful of the most productive soil, does not to the eye differ much from the same quantity taken from the most barren. The real difference is probably very slight; by chemical agency the philospher may work a total change, and may transmute an unfruitful region into a land of exuberant plenty. Water, like the atmospheric air, is compounded of certain gases: in the progress of scientific discovery a simple and sure method of manufacturing the useful fluid, in every situation and in any quantity, may be detected; the arid deserts of Africa may then be refreshed by a copious supply, and may be transformed at once into rich meadows, and vast fields of

maize and rice. The generation of heat is a mystery, but enough of the theory of caloric has already been developed to induce us to acquiesce in the notion that it will hereafter, and perhaps at no very distant period, be possible to produce heat at will, and to warm the most ungenial climates as readily as we now raise the temperature of our apartments to whatever degree we may deem agreeable or salutary. If, however, it be too much to anticipate that we shall ever become sufficiently skilful to command such a prodigious supply of heat, we may expect, without the fear of disappointment, soon to understand its nature and the causes of combustion, so far at least as to provide ourselves cheaply with a fund of heat that will supersede our costly and inconvenient fuel, and will suffice to warm our habitations, for culinary purposes and for the various demands of the mechanical arts. We could not determine, without actual experiment, whether an unknown substance were combustible; when we shall have thoroughly investigated the properties of fire, it may be that we shall be qualified to communicate to clay, to stones, and to water itself, a chemical recomposition that will render them as inflammable as wood, coals, and oil; for the difference of structure is minute and invisible, and the power of feeding flame may perhaps be easily added to any substance, or taken away from it. What a

comfort would it be to the poor at all times, and especially at this season, if we were capable of solving this problem alone, if we could furnish them with a competent supply of heat! These speculations may appear wild, and it may seem improbable that they will ever be realised, to persons who have not extended their views of what is practicable by closely watching science in its course onward; but there are many mysterious powers, many irresistible agents, with the existence and with some of the phenomena of which all are acquainted. What a mighty instrument would electricity be in the hands of him who knew how to wield it, in what manner to direct its omnipotent energies; and we may command an indefinite quantity of the fluid: by means of electrical kites we may draw down the lightning from heaven! What a terrible organ would the supernal shock prove, if we were able to guide it; how many of the secrets of nature would such a stupendous force unlock! The galvanic battery is a new engine; it has been used hitherto to an insignificant extent, yet has it wrought wonders already; what will not an extraordinary combination of troughs, of colossal magnitude, a well-arranged system of hundreds of metallic plates, effect? The balloon has not yet received the perfection of which it is surely capable; the art of navigating the air is in its first and most helpless infancy; the aerial

mariner still swims on bladders, and has not mounted even the rude raft: if we weigh this invention, curious as it is, with some of the subjects I have mentioned, it will seem trifling, no doubt—a mere toy, a feather, in comparison with the splendid anticipations of the philosophical chemist; yet it ought not altogether to be contemned. It promises prodigious facilities for locomotion, and will enable us to traverse vast tracts with ease and rapidity, and to explore unknown countries without difficulty. Why are we still so ignorant of the interior of Africa?—why do we not despatch intrepid aeronauts to cross it in every direction, and to survey the whole peninsula in a few weeks? The shadow of the first balloon, which a vertical sun would project precisely underneath it, as it glided silently over that hitherto unhappy country, would virtually emancipate every slave, and would annihilate slavery for ever."

With such fervour did the slender, beardless stranger speculate concerning the march of physical science: his speculations were as wild as the experience of twenty-one years has shown them to be; but the zealous earnestness for the augmentation of knowledge, and the glowing philanthropy and boundless benevolence that marked them, and beamed forth in the whole deportment of that extraordinary boy, are not less astonishing than they

would have been if the whole of his glorious anticipations had been prophetic; for these high qualities, at least, I have never found a parallel. When he had ceased to predict the coming honours of chemistry, and to promise the rich harvest of benefits it was soon to yield, I suggested that, although its results were splendid, yet for those who could not hope to make discoveries themselves, it did not afford so valuable a course of mental discipline as the moral sciences; moreover, that if chemists asserted that their science alone deserved to be cultivated, the mathematicians made the same assertion, and with equal confidence, respecting their studies; but that I was not sufficiently advanced myself in mathematics to be able to judge how far it was well founded. He declared that he knew nothing of mathematics, and treated the notion of their paramount importance with contempt.

"What do you say of metaphysics?" I continued; "is that science, too, the study of words only?"

"Ay, metaphysics," he said, in a solemn tone, and with a mysterious air, "that is a noble study indeed! If it were possible to make any discoveries there, they would be more valuable than any thing the chemists have done, or could do; they would disclose the analysis of mind, and not of mere matter!" Then rising from his chair, he paced slowly about the room, with prodigious strides, and

discoursed of souls with still greater animation and vehemence than he had displayed in treating of gases—of a future state—and especially of a former state—of pre-existence, obscured for a time through the suspension of consciousness—of personal identity, and also of ethical philosophy, in a deep and earnest tone of elevated morality, until he suddenly remarked that the fire was nearly out, and the candles were glimmering in their sockets, when he hastily apologised for remaining so long. I promised to visit the chemist in his laboratory, the alchemist in his study, the wizard in his cave, not at breakfast on that day, for it was already one, but in twelve hours—one hour after noon—and to hear some of the secrets of nature; and for that purpose, he told me his name, and described the situation of his rooms. I lighted him down-stairs as well as I could with the stump of a candle which had dissolved itself into a lamp, and I soon heard him running through the quiet quadrangle in the still night. That sound became afterwards so familiar to my ear, that I still seem to hear Shelley's hasty steps.

I trust, or I should perhaps rather say, I hope, that I was as much struck by the conversation, the aspect, and the deportment of my new acquaintance, as entirely convinced of the value of the acquisition I had just made, and as deeply impressed with

surprise and admiration, as became a young student not insensible of excellence, to whom a character so extraordinary, and indeed almost preternatural, had been suddenly unfolded. During his animated and eloquent discourses I felt a due reverence for his zeal and talent, but the human mind is capable of a certain amount of attention only. I had listened and discussed for seven or eight hours, and my spirits were totally exhausted; I went to bed as soon as Shelley had quitted my rooms, and fell instantly into a profound sleep; and I shook off with a painful effort, at the accustomed signal, the complete oblivion which then appeared to have been but momentary. Many of the wholesome usages of antiquity had ceased at Oxford; that of early rising, however, still lingered.

As soon as I got up, I applied myself sedulously to my academical duties and my accustomed studies. The power of habitual occupation is great and engrossing, and it is possible that my mind had not yet fully recovered from the agreeable fatigue of the preceding evening, for I had entirely forgotten my engagement, nor did the thought of my young guest once cross my fancy. It was strange that a person so remarkable and attractive should have thus disappeared for several hours from my memory; but such in truth was the fact, although I am unable to account for it in a satisfactory manner.

At one o'clock I put away my books and papers, and prepared myself for my daily walk; the weather was frosty, with fog, and whilst I lingered over the fire with that reluctance to venture forth into the cold air, common to those who have chilled themselves by protracted sedentary pursuits, the recollection of the scenes of yesterday flashed suddenly and vividly across my mind, and I quickly repaired to a spot that I may perhaps venture to predict many of our posterity will hereafter reverently visit, to the rooms in the corner next the hall of the principal quadrangle of University College; they are on the first floor, and on the right of the entrance, but by reason of the turn in the stairs, when you reach them, they will be upon your left hand. I remember the direction given at parting, and I soon found the door: it stood ajar. I tapped gently, and the discordant voice cried shrilly,—

"Come in!"

It was now nearly two. I began to apologise for my delay, but I was interrupted by a loud exclamation of surprise—

"What! is it one? I had no notion it was so late; I thought it was about ten or eleven."

"It is on the stroke of two, sir," said the scout, who was engaged in the vain attempt of setting the apartment in order.

"Of two!" Shelley cried, with increased wonder,

and presently the clock struck, and the servant noticed it, retired, and shut the door.

I perceived at once that the young chemist took no note of time. He measured duration, not by minutes and hours, like watchmakers and their customers, but by the successive trains of ideas and sensations; consequently, if there was a virtue of which he was utterly incapable, it was that homely, but pleasing and useful one, punctuality. He could not tear himself from his incessant abstractions to observe at intervals the growth and decline of the day; nor was he ever able to set apart even a small portion of his mental powers for a duty so simple as that of watching the course of the pointers on the dial.

I found him cowering over the fire, his chair planted in the middle of the rug, and his feet resting upon the fender; his whole appearance was dejected. His astonishment at the unexpected lapse of time roused him: as soon as the hour of the day was ascertained, he welcomed me, and seizing one of my arms with both his hands, he shook it with some force, and very cordially expressed his satisfaction at my visit. Then resuming his seat and his former posture, he gazed fixedly at the fire, and his limbs trembled and his teeth chattered with cold. I cleared the fire-place with the poker and stirred the fire, and when it blazed up, he drew back, and look-

ing askance towards the door, he exclaimed with a deep sigh,—

"Thank God, that fellow is gone at last!"

The assiduity of the scout had annoyed him, and he presently added—

"If you had not come, he would have stayed until he had put everything in my rooms into some place where I should never have found it again!"

He then complained of his health, and said that he was very unwell; but he did not appear to be affected by any disorder more serious than a slight aguish cold. I remarked the same contradiction in his rooms which I had already observed in his person and dress; they had just been papered and painted; the carpet, curtains, and furniture were quite new, and had not passed through several academical generations, after the established custom of transferring the whole of the movables to the successor on payment of thirds, that is, of two-thirds of the price last given. The general air of freshness was greatly obscured, however, by the indescribable confusion in which the various objects were mixed; notwithstanding the unwelcome exertions of the officious scout, scarcely a single article was in its proper position.

Books, boots, papers, shoes, philosophical instruments, clothes, pistols, linen, crockery, ammunition, and phials innumerable, with money, stockings,

prints, crucibles, bags, and boxes, were scattered on the floor and in every place; as if the young chemist, in order to analyse the mystery of creation, had endeavoured first to re-construct the primeval chaos. The tables, and especially the carpet, were already stained with large spots of various hues, which frequently proclaimed the agency of fire. An electrical machine, an air-pump, the galvanic trough, a solar microscope, and large glass jars and receivers, were conspicuous amidst the mass of matter. Upon the table by his side were some books lying open, several letters, a bundle of new pens, and a bottle of japan ink, that served as an inkstand; a piece of deal, lately part of the lid of a box, with many chips, and a handsome razor that had been used as a knife. There were bottles of soda water, sugar, pieces of lemon, and the traces of an effervescent beverage. Two piles of books supported the tongs, and these upheld a small glass retort above an argand lamp. I had not been seated many minutes before the liquor in the vessel boiled over, adding fresh stains to the table, and rising in fumes with a most disagreeable odour. Shelley snatched the glass quickly, and dashing it in pieces among the ashes under the grate, increased the unpleasant and penetrating effluvium.

He then proceeded, with much eagerness and enthusiasm, to show me the various instruments

especially the electrical apparatus; turning round the handle very rapidly, so that the fierce, crackling sparks flew forth; and presently standing upon the stool with glass feet, he begged me to work the machine until he was filled with the fluid, so that his long, wild locks bristled and stood on end. Afterwards he charged a powerful battery of several large jars; labouring with vast energy, and discoursing with increasing vehemence of the marvellous powers of electricity, of thunder and lightning; describing an electrical kite that he had made at home, and projecting another and an enormous one, or rather a combination of many kites, that would draw down from the sky an immense volume of electricity, the whole ammunition of a mighty thunderstorm; and this being directed to some point would there produce the most stupendous results.

In these exhibitions and in such conversation the time passed away rapidly, and the hour of dinner approached. Having pricked *æger* that day, or, in other words, having caused his name to be entered as an invalid, he was not required, or permitted, to dine in hall, or to appear in public within the college, or without the walls, until a night's rest should have restored the sick man to health.

He requested me to spend the evening at his

rooms; I consented, nor did I fail to attend immediately after dinner. We conversed until a late hour on miscellaneous topics. I remember that he spoke frequently of poetry, and that there was the same animation, the same glowing zeal, which had characterised his former discourses, and was so opposite to the listless languor, the monstrous indifference, if not the absolute antipathy, to learning, that so strangely darkened the collegiate atmosphere. It would seem, indeed, to one who rightly considered the final cause of the institution of an University, that all the rewards, all the honours, the most opulent foundation could accumulate, would be inadequate to remunerate an individual, whose thirst for knowledge was so intense, and his activity in the pursuit of it so wonderful and so unwearied. I participated in his enthusiasm, and soon forgot the shrill and unmusical voice that had at first seemed intolerable to my ear.

He was, indeed, a whole University in himself to me, in respect of the stimulus and incitement which his example afforded to my love of study, and he amply atoned for the disappointment I had felt on my arrival at Oxford. In one respect alone could I pretend to resemble him, in an ardent desire to gain knowledge; and as our tastes were the same in many particulars, we immediately became, through sympathy, most intimate and altogether inseparable

companions. We almost invariably passed the afternoon and evening together; at first alternately at our respective rooms, through a certain punctiliousness, but afterwards, when we became more familiar, most frequently by far at his; sometimes one or two good and harmless men of our acquaintance were present, but we were usually alone. His rooms were preferred to mine, because there his philosophical apparatus was at hand; and at that period he was not perfectly satisfied with the condition and circumstances of his existence, unless he was able to start from his seat at any moment, and seizing the air-pump, some magnets, the electrical machine, or the bottles containing those noxious and nauseous fluids, wherewith he incessantly besmeared and disfigured himself and his goods, to ascertain by actual experiment the value of some new idea that rushed into his brain. He spent much time in working by fits and starts and in an irregular manner with his instruments, and especially consumed his hours and his money in the assiduous cultivation of chemistry.

We have heard that one of the most distinguished of modern discoverers was abrupt, hasty, and to appearance disorderly in the conduct of his manipulations: the variety of the habits of great men is indeed infinite; it is impossible, therefore, to decide peremptorily as to the capabilities of individuals

from their course of proceeding, yet it certainly seemed highly improbable that Shelley was qualified to succeed in a science wherein a scrupulous minuteness and a mechanical accuracy are indispensable. His chemical operations seemed to an unskilful observer to promise nothing but disasters. His hands, his clothes, his books, and his furniture were stained and corroded by mineral acids. More than one hole in the carpet could elucidate the ultimate phenomenon of combustion; especially a formidable aperture in the middle of the room, where the floor also had been burnt by the spontaneous ignition caused by mixing ether with some other fluid in a crucible; and the honourable wound was speedily enlarged by rents, for the philosopher, as he hastily crossed the room in pursuit of truth, was frequently caught in it by the foot. Many times a day, but always in vain, would the sedulous scout say, pointing to the scorched boards with a significant look —

"Would it not be better, sir, for us to get this place mended?"

It seemed but too probable that in the rash ardour of experiment he would some day set the college on fire, or that he would blind, maim, or kill himself by the explosion of combustibles. It was still more likely indeed that he would poison himself, for plates and glasses, and every part of his tea equipage were used indiscriminately with crucibles,

retorts, and recipients, to contain the most deleterious ingredients. To his infinite diversion I used always to examine every drinking-vessel narrowly, and often to rinse it carefully, after that evening when we were taking tea by firelight, and my attention being attracted by the sound of something in the cup into which I was about to pour tea, I was induced to look into it. I found a seven-shilling piece partly dissolved by the *aqua regia* in which it was immersed. Although he laughed at my caution, he used to speak with horror of the consequences of having inadvertently swallowed, through a similar accident, some mineral poison, I think arsenic, at Eton, which he declared had not only seriously injured his health, but that he feared he should never entirely recover from the shock it had inflicted on his constitution. It seemed probable, notwithstanding his positive assertions, that his lively fancy exaggerated the recollection of the unpleasant and permanent taste, of the sickness and disorder of the stomach, which might arise from taking a minute portion of some poisonous substance by the like chance, for there was no vestige of a more serious and lasting injury in his youthful and healthy, although somewhat delicate aspect.

I knew little of the physical sciences, and I felt therefore but a slight degree of interest in them; I looked upon his philosophical apparatus merely as

toys and playthings, like a chess-board or a billiard-table. Through lack of sympathy, his zeal, which was at first so ardent, gradually cooled; and he applied himself to these pursuits, after a short time, less frequently and with less earnestness. The true value of them was often the subject of animated discussion; and I remember one evening at my own rooms, when we had sought refuge against the intense cold in the little inner apartment, or study, I referred, in the course of our debate, to a passage in Xenophon's "Memorabilia," where Socrates speaks in disparagement of Physics. He read it several times very attentively, and more than once aloud, slowly and with emphasis, and it appeared to make a strong impression on him.

Notwithstanding our difference of opinion as to the importance of chemistry, and on some other questions, our intimacy rapidly increased, and we soon formed the habit of passing the greater part of our time together; nor did this constant intercourse interfere with my usual studies. I never visited his rooms until one o'clock, by which hour, as I rose very early, I had not only attended the college lectures, but had read in private for several hours. I was enabled, moreover, to continue my studies afterwards in the evening, in consequence of a very remarkable peculiarity. My young and energetic friend was then overcome by extreme drowsiness,

which speedily and completely vanquished him; he would sleep from two to four hours, often so soundly that his slumbers resembled a deep lethargy; he lay occasionally upon the sofa, but more commonly stretched upon the rug before a large fire, like a cat; and his little round head was exposed to such a fierce heat, that I used to wonder how he was able to bear it. Sometimes I have interposed some shelter, but rarely with any permanent effect; for the sleeper usually contrived to turn himself, and to roll again into the spot where the fire glowed the brightest. His torpor was generally profound, but he would sometimes discourse incoherently for a long while in his sleep. At six he would suddenly compose himself, even in the midst of a most animated narrative or of earnest discussion; and he would lie buried in entire forgetfulness, in a sweet and mighty oblivion, until ten, when he would suddenly start up, and rubbing his eyes with great violence, and passing his fingers swiftly through his long hair, would enter at once into a vehement argument, or begin to recite verses, either of his own composition or from the works of others, with a rapidity and an energy that were often quite painful. During the period of his occultation I took tea, and read or wrote without interruption. He would sometimes sleep for a shorter time, for about two hours; postponing for the like period the commencement of

his retreat to the rug, and rising with tolerable punctuality at ten; and sometimes, although rarely, he was able entirely to forego the accustomed refreshment.

We did not consume the whole of our time, when he was awake, in conversation; we often read apart, and more frequently together: our joint studies were occasionally interrupted by long discussions—nevertheless I could enumerate many works, and several of them are extensive and important, which we perused completely and very carefully in this manner. At ten, when he awoke, he was always ready for his supper, which he took with a peculiar relish: after that social meal his mind was clear and penetrating, and his discourse eminently brilliant. He was unwilling to separate; but when the college clock struck two, I used to rise and retire to my room. Our conversations were sometimes considerably prolonged, but they seldom terminated before that chilly hour of the early morning; nor did I feel any inconvenience from thus reducing the period of rest to scarcely five hours.

A disquisition on some difficult question in the open air was not less agreeable to him than by the fire-side; if the weather was fine, or rather not altogether intolerable, we used to sally forth, when we met at one.

I have already pointed out several contradictions

in his appearance and character; his ordinary preparation for a rural walk formed a very remarkable contrast with his mild aspect and pacific habits. He furnished himself with a pair of duelling pistols, and a good store of powder and ball; and when he came to a solitary spot, he pinned a card, or fixed some other mark upon a tree or a bank, and amused himself by firing at it: he was a pretty good shot, and was much delighted at his success. He often urged me to try my hand and eye, assuring me that I was not aware of the pleasure of a good hit. One day when he was peculiarly pressing, I took up a pistol and asked him what I should aim at? And observing a slab of wood, about as big as a hearth-rug, standing against a wall, I named it as being a proper object. He said that it was much too far off, it was better to wait until we came nearer; but I answered—"I may as well fire here as anywhere," and instantly discharged my pistol. To my infinite surprise, the ball struck the elm target most accurately in the very centre. Shelley was delighted; he ran to the board, placed his chin close to it—gazed at the hole where the bullet was lodged—examined it attentively on all sides many times, and more than once measured the distance to the spot where I had stood.

I never knew any one so prone to admire as he was, in whom the principle of veneration was so

strong; he extolled my skill, urged me repeatedly to display it again, and begged that I would give him instructions in an art in which I so much excelled. I suffered him to enjoy his wonder for a few days, and then I told him, and with difficulty persuaded him, that my success was purely accidental; for I had seldom fired a pistol before, and never with ball, but with shot only, as a schoolboy, in clandestine and bloodless expeditions against blackbirds and yellowhammers.

The duelling pistols were a most discordant interruption of the repose of a quiet country walk; besides, he handled them with such inconceivable carelessness, that I had perpetually reason to apprehend that, as a trifling episode in the grand and heroic work of drilling a hole through the back of a card, or the front of one of his father's franks, he would shoot himself, or me, or both of us. How often have I lamented that Nature, which so rarely bestows upon the world a creature endowed with such marvellous talents, ungraciously rendered the gift less precious by implanting a fatal taste for perilous recreations, and a thoughtlessness in the pursuit of them, that often caused his existence from one day to another to seem in itself miraculous. I opposed the practice of walking armed, and I at last succeeded in inducing him to leave the pistols at home, and to forbear the use of them.

I prevailed, I believe, not so much by argument or persuasion, as by secretly abstracting, when he equipped himself for the field, and it was not difficult with him, the powder-flask, the flints, or some other indispensable article. One day, I remember, he was grievously discomposed, and seriously offended, to find, on producing his pistols, after descending rapidly into a quarry, where he proposed to take a few shots, that not only had the flints been removed, but the screws and the bits of steel at the tops of the cocks, which hold the flints, were also wanting. He determined to return to College for them,—I accompanied him. I tempted him, however, by the way, to try to define anger, and to discuss the nature of that affection of the mind, to which, as the discussion waxed warm, he grew exceedingly hostile in theory, and could not be brought to admit that it could possibly be excusable in any case. In the course of conversation, moreover, he suffered himself to be insensibly turned away from his original path and purpose. I have heard, that some years after he left Oxford he resumed the practice of pistol-shooting, and attained to a very unusual degree of skill in an accomplishment so entirely incongruous with his nature.

Of rural excursions he was at all times fond; he loved to walk in the woods, to stroll on the banks of the Thames, but especially to wander alas

Shotover Hill. Thewas a pond at the foot of the hill, before ascending and on the left of the road; it was formed by the ter which had filled an old quarry: whenever I was permitted to shape his course as he would e proceeded to the edge of this pool, although e scene had no other attractions than a certain dness and barrenness. Here he would linger untlusk, gazing in silence on the water, repeating vers aloud, or earnestly discussing themes that had connexion with surrounding objects. Sometime e would raise a stone as large as he could lift, delrately throw it into the water as far as his strem enabled him; then he would loudly exult at thelash, and would quietly watch the decreasing agiton, until the last faint ring and almost imperceptil ripple disappeared on the still surface. "Such a the effects of an impulse on the air," he wouldhy; and he complained of our ignorance of the thry of sound,—that the subject was obscure andaysterious, and many of the phenomena were ntradictory and inexplicable. He asserted that e science of acoustics ought to be cultivated, and at by well-devised experiments valuable discover would undoubtedly be made; and he related m remarkable stories, connected with the subject, t he had heard or read. Sometimes, he would b himself in splitting the slaty stones, in select thin and flat pieces, and in

giving them a round form; and when he had collected a sufficient number, he would gravely make ducks and drakes with them, counting, with the utmost glee, the number of bounds, as they flew along skimming the surface of the pond. He was a devoted worshipper of the water-nymphs; for whenever he found a pool, or even a small puddle, he would loiter near it, and it was no easy task to get him to quit it. He had not yet learned that art, from which he afterwards derived so much pleasure —the construction of paper boats. He twisted a morsel of paper into a form that a lively fancy might consider a likeness of a boat, and committing it to the water, he anxiously watched the fortunes of the frail bark, which, if it was not soon swamped by the faint winds and miniature waves, gradually imbibed water through its porous sides, and sank. Sometimes, however, the fairy vessel performed its little voyage, and reached the opposite shore of the puny ocean in safety. It is astonishing with what keen delight he engaged in this singular pursuit. It was not easy for an uninitiated spectator to bear with tolerable patience the vast delay, on the brink of a wretched pond upon a bleak common, and in the face of a cutting north-east wind, on returning to dinner from a long walk at sunset on a cold winter's day; nor was it easy to be so harsh as to interfere with a harmless gratification, that was

evidently exquisite. It was not easy, at least, to induce the ship-builder to desist from launching his tiny fleets, so long as any timber remained in the dockyard. I prevailed once, and once only; it was one of those bitter Sundays that commonly receive the new year; the sun had set, and it had almost begun to snow. I had exhorted him long in vain, with the eloquence of a frozen and famished man, to proceed; at last, I said in despair—alluding to his never-ending creations, for a paper-navy that was to be set afloat simultaneously lay at his feet, and he was busily constructing more, with blue and swollen hands,—"Shelley, there is no use in talking to you; you are the Demiurgus of Plato!" He instantly caught up the whole flotilla, and bounding homeward with mighty strides, laughed aloud—laughed like a giant, as he used to say. So long as his paper lasted, he remained riveted to the spot, fascinated by this peculiar amusement; all waste paper was rapidly consumed, then the covers of letters, next letters of little value: the most precious contributions of the most esteemed correspondent, although eyed wistfully many times, and often returned to the pocket, were sure to be sent at last in pursuit of the former squadrons. Of the portable volumes which were the companions of his rambles, and he seldom went out without a book, the fly-leaves were commonly wanting,—he had applied

them as our ancestor Noah appled Gopher wood; but learning was so sacred in his eyes, that he never trespassed farther upon the integrity of the copy; the work itself was always respected. It has been said, that he once found himself on the north bank of the Serpentine river without the materials for indulging those inclinations, which the sight of water invariably inspired, for he had exhausted his supplies on the round pond in Kensington Gardens. Not a single scrap of paper could be found, save only a bank-post bill for fifty pounds; he hesitated long, but yielded at last; he twisted it into a boat with the extreme refinement of his skill, and committed it with the utmost dexterity to fortune, watching its progress, if possible, with a still more intense anxiety than usual. Fortune often favours those who frankly and fully trust her; the north-east wind gently wafted the costly skiff to the south bank, where, during the latter part of the voyage, the venturous owner had waited its arrival with patient solicitude. The story, of course, is a Mythic fable, but it aptly pourtrays the dominion of a singular and most unaccountable passion over the mind of an enthusiast.

But to return to Oxford. Shelley disliked exceedingly all college-meetings, and especially one which was the most popular with others—the public dinner in the hall; he used often to absent

himself, and he was greatly delighted whenever I agreed to partake with him in a slight luncheon at one, to take a long walk into the country, and to return after dark to tea and supper in his rooms. On one of these expeditions we wandered farther than usual, without regarding the distance or the lapse of time; but we had no difficulty in finding our way home, for the night was clear and frosty, and the moon at the full; and most glorious was the spectacle as we approached the City of Colleges, and passed through the silent streets. It was near ten when we entered our college; not only was it too late for tea, but supper was ready, the cloth laid, and the table spread. A large dish of scalloped oysters had been set within the fender, to be kept hot for the famished wanderers.

Among the innumerable contradictions in the character and deportment of the youthful poet was a strange mixture of a singular grace, which manifested itself in his actions and gestures, with an occasional awkwardness almost as remarkable. As soon as we entered the room, he placed his chair as usual directly in front of the fire, and eagerly pressed forward to warm himself, for the frost was severe, and he was very sensible of cold. Whilst cowering over the fire and rubbing his hands, he abruptly set both his feet at once upon the edge of the fender; it immediately flew up,

threw under the grate the dish, which was broken into two pieces, and the whole of the delicious mess was mingled with the cinders and ashes, that had accumulated for several hours. It was impossible that a hungry and frozen pedestrian should restrain a strong expression of indignation, or that he should forbear, notwithstanding the exasperation of cold and hunger, from smiling and forgiving the accident at seeing the whimsical air and aspect of the offender, as he held up with the shovel the long-anticipated food, deformed by ashes, coals, and cinders, with a ludicrous expression of exaggerated surprise, disappointment, and contrition. It would be easy to fill many volumes with reminiscences characteristic of my young friend, and of these the most trifling would perhaps best illustrate his innumerable peculiarities. With the discerning, trifles, although they are accounted such, have their value. A familiarity with the daily habits of Shelley, and the knowledge of his demeanour in private, will greatly facilitate, and they are perhaps even essential to, the full comprehension of his views and opinions. Traits that unfold an infantine simplicity, the genuine simplicity of true genius, will be slighted by those only who are ignorant of the qualities that constitute greatness of soul: the philosophical observer knows well, that to have shown a mind to be original and perfectly natural,

is no inconsiderable step in demonstrating that it is also great.

Our supper had disappeared under the grate, but we were able to silence the importunity of hunger. As the supply of cheese was scanty, Shelley pretended, in order to atone for his carelessness, that he never eat it; but I refused to take more than my share, and notwithstanding his reiterated declarations, that it was offensive to his palate and hurtful to his stomach, as I was inexorable, he devoured the remainder, greedily swallowing not merely the cheese, but the rind also, after scraping it cursorily, and with a curious tenderness. A tankard of the stout brown ale of our college aided us greatly in removing the sense of cold, and in supplying the deficiency of food, so that we turned our chairs towards the fire, and began to brew our negus as cheerfully as if the bounty of the hospitable gods had not been intercepted.

We reposed ourselves after the fatigue of an unusually long walk, and silence was broken by short remarks only, and at considerable intervals, respecting the beauty of moonlight scenes, and especially of that we had just enjoyed; the serenity and clearness of the night exceeded any we had before witnessed; the light was so strong it would have been easy to read or write. "How strange was it, that light proceeding from the sun, which

was at such a prodigious distance, and at that time entirely out of sight, should be reflected from the moon, and that was no trifling journey, and sent back to the earth in such abundance, and with so great force!"

Languid expressions of admiration dropped from our lips, as we stretched our stiff and wearied limbs towards the genial warmth of a blazing fire. On a sudden, Shelley started from his seat, seized one of the candles, and began to walk about the room on tiptoe in profound silence, often stooping low, and evidently engaged in some mysterious search. I asked him what he wanted, but he returned no answer, and continued his whimsical and secret inquisition, which he prosecuted in the same extraordinary manner in the bed-room and the little study. It had occurred to him that a dessert had possibly been sent to his rooms whilst we were absent, and had been put away. He found the object of his pursuit at last, and produced some small dishes from the study; apples, oranges, almonds and raisins, and a little cake. These he set close together at my side of the table, without speaking, but with a triumphant look, yet with the air of a penitent making restitution and reparation, and then resumed his seat. The unexpected succour was very seasonable; this light fare, a few glasses of negus, warmth, and especially rest, restored our lost vigour, and our spirits. We spoke

of our happy life, of Universities, of what they might be; of what they were. How powerfully they might stimulate the student, how much valuable instruction they might impart! We agreed that, although the least possible benefit was conferred upon us in this respect at Oxford, we were deeply indebted, nevertheless, to the great and good men of former days, who founded those glorious institutions, for devising a scheme of life, which, however deflected from its original direction, still tended to study, and especially for creating establishments that called young men together from all parts of the empire, and for endowing them with a celebrity that was able to induce so many to congregate. Without such an opportunity of meeting we should never have been acquainted with each other; in so large a body there must doubtless be many at that time, who were equally thankful for the occasion of the like intimacy; and in former generations how many friendships that had endured through all the various trials of a long and eventful life, had arisen here from accidental communion, as in our own case.

If there was little positive encouragement, there were various negative inducements to acquire learning; there were no interruptions, no secular cares; our wants were well supplied without the slightest exertion on our part, and the exact regularity of

academical existence cut off that dissipation of the hours and the thoughts, which so often prevails where the daily course is not pre-arranged. The necessity of early rising was beneficial; like the Pythagoreans of old, we began with the Gods; the salutary attendance in chapel every morning not only compelled us to quit our beds betimes, but imposed additional duties conducive to habits of industry; it was requisite, not merely to rise, but to leave our rooms, to appear in public, and to remain long enough to destroy the disposition to indolence, which might still linger if we were permitted to remain by the fireside. To pass some minutes in society, yet in solemn silence, is like the Pythagorean initiation, and we auspicate the day happily by commencing with sacred things. I scarcely ever visited Shelley before one o'clock; when I met him in the morning at chapel, he used studiously to avoid all communication, and, as soon as the doors were opened, to effect a ludicrously precipitate retreat to his rooms.

"The country near Oxford," he continued, as we reposed after our meagre supper, "has no pretensions to peculiar beauty, but it is quiet, and pleasant, and rural, and purely agricultural after the good old fashion; it is not only unpolluted by manufactures and commerce, but it is exempt from the desecration of the modern husbandry, of a system which accounts the farmer a manufacturer of hay and

corn: I delight to wander over it." He enlarged upon the pleasure of our pedestrian excursions, and added — "I can imagine few things that would annoy me more severely than to be disturbed in our tranquil course; it would be a cruel calamity to be interrupted by some untoward accident, to be compelled to quit our calm and agreeable retreat. Not only would it be a sad mortification, but a real misfortune, for if I remain here I shall study more closely and with greater advantage than I could in any other situation that I can conceive. Are you not of the same opinion?"

"Entirely."

"I regret only that the period of our residence is limited to four years; I wish they would revive, for our sake, the old term of six or seven years. If we consider how much there is for us to learn,"—here he paused and sighed deeply through that despondency which sometimes comes over the unwearied and zealous student,—"we shall allow that the longer period would still be far too short!"

I assented, and we discoursed concerning the abridgement of the ancient term of residence, and the diminution of the academical year by frequent, protracted, and most inconvenient vacations.

"To quit Oxford," he said, "would be still more unpleasant to you than to myself, for you aim at objects that I do not seek to compass, and you

cannot fail, since you are resolved to place your success beyond the reach of chance."

He enumerated with extreme rapidity and in his enthusiastic strain, some of the benefits and comforts of a college life.

"Then the *oak* is such a blessing," he exclaimed with peculiar fervour, clasping his hands, and repeating often—"the oak is such a blessing!" slowly and in a solemn tone. "The oak alone goes far towards making this place a paradise. In what other spot in the world, surely in none that I have hitherto visited, can you say confidently, it is perfectly impossible, physically impossible, that I should be disturbed? Whether a man desire solitary study, or to enjoy the society of a friend or two, he is secure against interruption. It is not so in a house, not by any means; there is not the same protection in a house, even in the best-contrived house. The servant is bound to answer the door; he must appear and give some excuse: he may betray by hesitation and confusion that he utters a falsehood; he must expose himself to be questioned; he must open the door and violate your privacy in some degree; besides there are other doors, there are windows at least, through which a prying eye can detect some indication that betrays the mystery. How different is it here! The bore arrives; the outer door is shut; it is black and solid, and per-

fectly impenetrable, as is your secret; the doors are all alike; he can distinguish mine from yours by the geographical position only. He may knock; he may call; he may kick, if he will; he may inquire of a neighbour, but he can inform him of nothing; he can only say, the door is shut, and this he knows already. He may leave his card, that you may rejoice over it, and at your escape; he may write upon it the hour when he proposes to call again, to put you upon your guard, and that he may be quite sure of seeing the back of your door once more. When the bore meets you and says, I called at your house at such a time, you are required to explain your absence, to prove an *alibi* in short, and perhaps to undergo a rigid cross-examination; but if he tells you, 'I called at your rooms yesterday at three, and the door was shut,' you have only to say, 'Did you? was it?' and there the matter ends."

"Were you not charmed with your oak? did it not instantly captivate you?"

"My introduction to it was somewhat unpleasant and unpropitious. The morning after my arrival I was sitting at breakfast; my scout, the Arimaspian, apprehending that the singleness of his eye may impeach his character for officiousness, in order to escape the reproach of seeing half as much only as other men, is always striving to prove that he sees at least twice as far as the most sharpsighted: after

many demonstrations of superabundant activity, he inquired if I wanted anything more; I answered in the negative. He had already opened the door: 'Shall I sport, sir?' he asked briskly as he stood upon the threshold. He seemed so unlike a sporting character, that I was curious to learn in what sport he proposed to indulge. I answered—'Yes, by all means,' and anxiously watched him, but to my surprise and disappointment he instantly vanished. As soon as I had finished my breakfast, I sallied forth to survey Oxford; I opened one door quickly, and not suspecting that there was a second, I struck my head against it with some violence. The blow taught me to observe that every set of rooms has two doors, and I soon learned that the outer door, which is thick and solid, is called the oak, and to shut it is termed, to sport. I derived so much benefit from my oak, that I soon pardoned this slight inconvenience: it is surely the tree of knowledge."

"Who invented the oak?"

"The inventors of the science of living in rooms, or chambers—the Monks."

"Ah! they were sly fellows; none but men who were reputed to devote themselves for many hours to prayers, to religious meditations, and holy abstractions, would ever have been permitted quietly to place at pleasure such a barrier between them-

selves and the world. We now reap the advantage of their reputation for sanctity; I shall revere my oak more than ever, since its origin is so sacred."

The sympathies of Shelley were instantaneous and powerful with those, who evinced in any degree the qualities, for which he was himself so remarkable—simplicity of character, unaffected manners, genuine modesty, and an honest willingness to acquire knowledge, and he sprang to meet their advances with an ingenuous eagerness which was peculiar to him; but he was suddenly and violently repelled, like the needle from the negative pole of the magnet, by any indication of pedantry, presumption, or affectation. So much was he disposed to take offence at such defects, and so acutely was he sensible of them, that he was sometimes unjust, through an excessive sensitiveness, in his estimate of those, who had shocked him by sins, of which he was himself utterly incapable. Whatever might be the attainments, and however solid the merits of the persons filling at that time the important office of instructors in the University, they were entirely destitute of the attractions of manner; their address was sometimes repulsive, and the formal, priggish tutor was too often intent upon the ordinary academical course alone to the entire exclusion of every other department of knowledge: his thoughts were wholly engrossed by it, and so narrow were his

views, that he overlooked the claims of all merit, however exalted, except success in the public examinations.

"They are very dull people here," Shelley said to me one evening soon after his arrival, with a long-drawn sigh, after musing awhile; "a little man sent for me this morning, and told me in an almost inaudible whisper that I must read: 'you must read,' he said many times in his small voice. I answered that I had no objection. He persisted; so, to satisfy him, for he did not appear to believe me, I told him I had some books in my pocket, and I began to take them out. He stared at me, and said that was not exactly what he meant: 'you must read *Prometheus Vinctus*, and Demosthenes *de Coronâ*, and Euclid.' Must I read Euclid? I asked sorrowfully. 'Yes, certainly; and when you have read the Greek works I have mentioned, you must begin Aristotle's Ethics, and then you may go on to his other treatises. It is of the utmost importance to be well acquainted with Aristotle.' This he repeated so often that I was quite tired, and at last I said, Must I care about Aristotle? what if I do not mind Aristotle? I then left him, for he seemed to be in great perplexity."

Notwithstanding the slight he had thus cast upon the great master of the science, that has so long been the staple of Oxford, he was not blind to the value of the science itself. He took the scholastic

logic, very kindly, seized its distinctions with his accustomed quickness, felt a keen interest in the study, and patiently endured the exposition of those minute discriminations, which the tyro is apt to contemn as vain and trifling.

It should seem that the ancient method of communicating the art of syllogising has been preserved, in part at least, by tradition in this university. I have sometimes met with learned foreigners, who understood the end and object of the scholastic logic, having received the traditional instruction in some of the old universities on the Continent; but I never found even one of my countrymen, except Oxonians, who rightly comprehended the nature of the science: I may, perhaps, add, that in proportion as the self-taught logicians had laboured in the pursuit, they had gone far astray. It is possible, nevertheless, that those who have drunk at the fountain-head, and have read the "Organon" of Aristotle in the original, may have attained to a just comprehension by their unassisted energies; but in this age, and in this country, I apprehend the number of such adventurous readers is very inconsiderable.

Shelley frequently exercised his ingenuity in long discussions respecting various questions in logic, and more frequently indulged in metaphysical inquiries. We read several metaphysical works

together, in whole, or in part, for the first time, or after a previous perusal, by one, or by both of us.

The examination of a chapter of Locke's "Essay concerning Human Understanding" would induce him, at any moment, to quit every other pursuit. We read together Hume's "Essays," and some productions of Scotch metaphysicians, of inferior ability—all with assiduous and friendly altercations, and the latter writers, at least, with small profit, unless some sparks of knowledge were struck out in the collision of debate. We read also certain popular French works, that treat of man, for the most part in a mixed method, metaphysically, morally, and politically. Hume's "Essays" were a favourite book with Shelley, and he was always ready to put forward in argument, the doctrines they uphold.

It may seem strange that he should ever have accepted the sceptical philosophy, a system so uncongenial with a fervid and imaginative genius, which can allure the cool, cautious, abstinent reasoner alone, and would deter the enthusiastic, the fanciful, and the speculative. We must bear in mind, however, that he was an eager, bold, and unwearied disputant; and although the position, in which the sceptic and the materialist love to entrench themselves, offers no picturesque attractions to the eye of the poet, it is well adapted for defensive warfare; and it is not easy for an ordinary enemy

to dislodge him, who occupies a post that derives strength from the weakness of the assailant. It has been insinuated, that whenever a man of real talent and generous feelings condescends to fight under these colours, he is guilty of a dissimulation, which he deems harmless, perhaps even praiseworthy, for the sake of victory in argument.

It was not a little curious to observe one, whose sanguine temper led him to believe implicitly every assertion, so that it was improbable and incredible, exulting in the success of his philosophical doubts, when, like the calmest and most suspicious of analysts, he refused to admit, without strict proof, propositions that many, who are not deficient in metaphysical prudence, account obvious and self-evident. The sceptical philosophy had another charm; it partook of the new and the wonderful, inasmuch as it called into doubt, and seemed to place in jeopardy, during the joyous hours of disputation, many important practical conclusions. To a soul loving excitement and change, destruction, so that it be on a grand scale, may sometimes prove hardly less inspiring than creation. The feat of the magician, who, by the touch of his wand, could cause the great pyramid to dissolve into the air, and to vanish from the sight, would be as surprising as the achievement of him who, by the same rod, could instantly raise a similar mass in any chosen spot.

If the destruction of the eternal monument was only apparent, the ocular sophism would be at once harmless and ingenious: so was it with the logomachy of the young and strenuous logician, and his intellectual activity merited praise and reward.

There was another reason, moreover, why the sceptical philosophy should be welcome to Shelley at that time: he was young, and it is generally acceptable to youth. It is adopted as the abiding rule of reason throughout life by those only who are distinguished by a sterility of soul, a barrenness of invention, a total dearth of fancy, and a scanty stock of learning. Such, in truth, although the warmth of juvenile blood, the light burthen of few years, and the precipitation of inexperience, may sometimes seem to contradict the assertion, is the state of the mind at the commencement of manhood, when the vessel has as yet received only a small portion of the cargo of the accumulated wisdom of past ages, when the amount of mental operations, that have actually been performed, is small, and the materials, upon which the imagination can work, are insignificant; consequently, the inventions of the young are crude and frigid.

Hence the most fertile mind exactly resembles in early youth the hopeless barrenness of those, who have grown old in vain, as to its actual condition, and it differs only in the unseen capacity

24193

for future production. The philosopher who declares that he knows nothing, and that nothing can be known, will readily find followers among the young, for they are sensible that they possess the requisite qualification for entering his school, and are as far advanced in the science of ignorance as their master.

A stranger, who should have chanced to have been present at some of Shelley's disputes, or who knew him only from having read some of the short argumentative essays which he composed as voluntary exercises, would have said, "Surely the soul of Hume passed by transmigration into the body of that eloquent young man; or rather, he represents one of the enthusiastic and animated materialists of the French school, whom revolutionary violence lately intercepted at an early age in his philosophical career."

There were times, however, when a visitor, who had listened to glowing discourses delivered with a more intense ardour, would have hailed a young Platonist, breathing forth the ideal philosophy, and in his pursuit of the intellectual world entirely overlooking the material, or noticing it only to contemn it. The tall boy, who is permitted for the first season to scare the partridges with his new fowling-piece, scorns to handle the top, or the hoop of his younger brother; thus the man, whose

years and studies are mature, slights the first feeble aspirations after the higher departments of knowledge, that were deemed so important during his residence at college. It seems laughable, but it is true, that our knowledge of Plato was derived solely from Dacier's translation of a few of the dialogues, and from an English version of that French translation; we had never attempted a single sentence in the Greek. Since that time, however, I believe, few of our countrymen have read the golden works of that majestic philosopher in the original language more frequently and more carefully than ourselves; and few, if any, with more profit than Shelley. Although the source, whence flowed our earliest taste of the divine philosophy, was scanty and turbid, the draught was not the less grateful to our lips: our zeal in some measure atoned for our poverty.

Shelley was never weary of reading, or of listening to me whilst I read, passages from the dialogues contained in this collection, and especially from the "Phædo," and he was vehemently excited by the striking doctrines which Socrates unfolds, especially by that which teaches that all our knowledge consists of reminiscences of what we had learned in a former existence. He often rose, paced slowly about the room, shook his long wild locks, and discoursed in a solemn tone and with a mysterious

air, speculating concerning our previous condition, and the nature of our life and occupations in that world, where, according to Plato, we had attained to erudition, and had advanced ourselves in knowledge so far that the most studious and the most inventive, or in other words, those who have the best memory, are able to call back a part only, and with much pain and extreme difficulty, of what was formerly familiar to us.

It is hazardous, however, to speak of his earliest efforts as a Platonist, lest they should be confounded with his subsequent advancement; it is not easy to describe his first introduction to the exalted wisdom of antiquity without borrowing inadvertently from the knowledge which he afterwards acquired. The cold, ungenial, foggy atmosphere of northern metaphysics was less suited to the ardent temperament of his soul, than the warm, bright, vivifying climate of the southern and eastern philosophy; his genius expanded under the benign influence of the latter, and he derived copious instruction from a luminous system, that is only dark through excess of brightness, and seems obscure to vulgar vision through its extreme radiance. Nevertheless, in argument,—and to argue on all questions was his dominant passion,—he usually adopted the scheme of the sceptics, partly, perhaps, because it was more popular and is more generally understood: the disputant, who

would use Plato as his text-book in this age, would reduce his opponents to a small number indeed.

The study of that highest department of ethics, which includes all the inferior branches, and is directed towards the noblest and most important ends, of Jurisprudence, was always next my heart; at an early age it attracted my attention.

When I first endeavoured to turn the regards of Shelley towards this engaging pursuit, he strongly expressed a very decided aversion to such inquiries, deeming them worthless and illiberal. The beautiful theory of the art of right, and the honourable office of administering distributive justice, have been brought into general discredit, unhappily for the best interests of humanity, and, to the vast detriment of the state, into unmerited disgrace in the modern world by the errors of practitioners. An ingenuous mind instinctively shrinks from the contemplation of legal topics, because the word law is associated with and inevitably calls up the idea of the low chicanery of a pettifogging attorney, of the vulgar oppression and gross insolence of a bailiff, or, at best, of the wearisome and unmeaning tautology that distends an act of parliament, and the dull dropsical compositions of the special pleader, the conveyancer, or other draughtsman.

In no country is this unhappy debasement of a most illustrious science more remarkable than in

our own; no other nation is so prone to, or so patient of abuses; in no other land are posts in themselves honourable so accessible to the meanest. The spirit of trade favours the degradation, and every commercial town is a well-spring of vulgarity, which sends forth hosts of practitioners devoid of the solid and elegant attainments which could sustain the credit of the science, but so strong in the artifices that insure success, as not only to monopolize the rewards due to merit, but sometimes even *to climb the judgment-seat.*

It is not wonderful, therefore, that generous minds, until they have been taught to discriminate, and to distinguish a noble science from ignoble practices, should usually confound them together, hastily condemning the former with the latter. Shelley listened with much attention to questions of natural law, and with the warm interest that he felt in all metaphysical disquisitions, after he had conquered his first prejudice against practical jurisprudence.

The science of right, like other profound and extensive sciences, can only be acquired completely when the foundations have been laid at an early age: had the energies of Shelley's vigorous mind taken this direction at that time, it is impossible to doubt that he would have become a distinguished jurist. Besides that fondness for such inquiries, which is

necessary to success in any liberal pursuit, he displayed the most acute sensitiveness of injustice, however slight, and a vivid perception of inconvenience. As soon as a wrong, arising from a proposed enactment, or a supposed decision, was suggested, he instantly rushed into the opposite extreme; and when a greater evil was shown to result from the contrary course which he had so hastily adopted, his intellect was roused, and he endeavoured most earnestly to ascertain the true mean that would secure the just by avoiding the unjust extremes.

I have observed in young men, that the propensity to plunge headlong into a net of difficulty, on being startled at an apparent want of equity in any rule that was propounded, although at first it might seem to imply a lack of caution and foresight,—which are eminently the virtues of legislators and of judges,—was an unerring prognostic of a natural aptitude for pursuits, wherein eminence is inconsistent with an inertness of the moral sense and a recklessness of the violation of rights, however remote and trifling. Various instances of such aptitude in Shelley might be furnished, but these studies are interesting to a limited number of persons only.

As the mind of Shelley was apt to acquire many of the most valuable branches of liberal knowledge, so there were other portions comprised within the

circle of science, for the reception of which, however active and acute, it was entirely unfit. He rejected with marvellous impatience every mathematical discipline that was offered; no problem could awaken the slightest curiosity, nor could he be made sensible of the beauty of any theorem. The method of demonstration had no charms for him; he complained of the insufferable prolixity and the vast tautology of Euclid and the other ancient geometricians; and when the discoveries of modern analysts were presented, he was immediately distracted, and fell into endless musings.

With respect to the Oriental tongues, he coldly observed that the appearance of the characters was curious. Although he perused with more than ordinary eagerness the relations of travellers in the East, and the translations of the marvellous tales of oriental fancy, he was not attracted by the desire to penetrate the languages which veil these treasures. He would never deign to lend an ear, or an eye, for a moment to my Hebrew studies, in which I had made at that time some small progress; nor could he be tempted to inquire into the value of the singular lore of the Rabbins.

He was able, like the many, to distinguish a violet from a sunflower, and a cauliflower from a peony: but his botanical knowledge was more limited than that of the least skilful of common observers, for he

was neglectful of flowers. He was incapable of apprehending the delicate distinctions of structure which form the basis of the beautiful classification of modern botanists. I was never able to impart even a glimpse of the merits of Ray, or Linnæus, or to encourage a hope that he would ever be competent to see the visible analogies that constitute the marked, yet mutually approaching *genera*, into which the productions of nature, and especially vegetables, are divided.

It may seem invidious to notice imperfections in a mind of the highest order, but the exercise of a due candour, however unwelcome, is required to satisfy those who were not acquainted with Shelley, that the admiration excited by his marvellous talents and manifold virtues in all who were so fortunate as to enjoy the opportunity of examining his merits by frequent intercourse, was not the result of the blind partiality that amiable and innocent dispositions, attractive manners, and a noble and generous bearing sometimes create.

Shelley was always unwilling to visit the remarkable specimens of architecture, the objects of art, and the various antiquities that adorn Oxford; although, if he encountered them by accident, and they were pointed out to him, he admired them more sincerely and heartily than the generality of strangers, who, through compliance with fashion,

ostentatiously sought them out. His favourite recreation, as I have already stated, was a free, unrestrained ramble into the country.

After quitting the city and its environs by walking briskly along the highway for several miles, it was his delight to strike boldly into the fields, to cross the country daringly on foot, as is usual with sportsmen in shooting; to perform, as it were, a pedestrian steeple-chase. He was strong, light, and active, and in all respects well suited for such exploits, and we used frequently to traverse a considerable tract in this manner, especially when the frost had dried the land, had given complete solidity to the most treacherous paths, and had thrown a natural bridge over spots that in open weather during the winter would have been nearly impassable.

By resolutely piercing through a district in this manner, we often stumbled upon objects in our humble travels that created a certain surprise and interest: some of them are still fresh in my recollection. My susceptible companion was occasionally much delighted, and strongly excited by incidents that would perhaps have seemed unimportant trifles to others.

One day we had penetrated somewhat farther than usual, for the ground was in excellent order, and as the day was intensely cold, although bright and sunny, we had pushed on with uncommon speed.

I do not remember the direction we took; nor can I even determine on which side of the Thames our course lay. We had crossed roads and lanes, and had traversed open fields and inclosures; some tall and ancient trees were on our right hand; we skirted a little wood, and presently came to a small copse. It was guarded by an old hedge, or thicket; we were deflected, therefore, from our onward course towards the left, and we were winding round it, when the quick eye of my companion perceived a gap; he instantly dashed in with as much alacrity as if he had suddenly caught a glimpse of a pheasant that he had lately wounded in a district where such game was scarce, and he disappeared in a moment.

I followed him, but with less ardour, and passing through a narrow belt of wood and thicket, I presently found him standing motionless in one of his picturesque attitudes, riveted to the earth in speechless astonishment. He had thrown himself thus precipitately into a trim flower-garden, of a circular, or rather an oval form, of small dimensions, encompassed by a narrow, but close girdle of trees and underwood; it was apparently remote from all habitations, and it contrasted strongly with the bleak and bare country through which we had recently passed.

Had the secluded scene been bright with the gay flowers of spring, with hyacinths and tulips; had it

been powdered with mealy auriculas, or conspicuous for a gaudy show of all anemones and of every ranunculus; had it been profusely decorated by the innumerable roses of summer, it would be easy to understand why it was so cheerful. But we were now in the very heart of winter, and after much frost scarcely a single wretched brumal flower lingered and languished. There was no foliage, save the dark leaves of evergreens, and of them there were many, especially around and on the edges of the magic circle, on which account possibly, but chiefly perhaps through the symmetry of the numerous small parterres, the scrupulous neatness of the corresponding walks, the just ordonnance and disposition of certain benches, the integrity and freshness of the green trellices, and of the skeletons of some arbours, and through every leafless excellence which the dried anatomy of a flower-garden can exhibit, its past and its future wealth seemed to shine forth in its present poverty, and its potential glories adorned its actual disgrace.

The sudden transition from the rugged fields to this garnished and decorated retreat was striking, and held my imagination captive a few moments; the impression, however, would probably have soon faded from my memory, had it not been fixed there by the recollection of the beings who gave animation and a permanent interest to the polished nook.

We admired the trim and retired garden for some minutes in silence, and afterwards each answered in monosyllables the other's brief expressions of wonder. Neither of us had advanced a single step beyond the edge of the thicket through which we had entered; but I was about to precede, and to walk round the magic circle, in order fully to survey the place, when Shelley startled me by turning with astonishing rapidity, and dashing through the bushes and the gap in the fence with the mysterious and whimsical agility of a kangaroo. Had he caught a glimpse of a tiger crouching behind the laurels, and preparing to spring upon him, he could not have vanished more promptly, or more silently. I was habituated to his abrupt movements, nevertheless his alacrity surprised me, and I tried in vain to discover what object had scared him away. I retired, therefore, to the gap, and when I reached it, I saw him already at some distance, proceeding with gigantic strides nearly in the same route by which we came. I ran after him, and when I rejoined him, he had halted upon a turnpike-road, and was hesitating as to the course he ought to pursue. It was our custom to advance across the country as far as the utmost limits of our time would permit, and to go back to Oxford by the first public road we found, after attaining the extreme distance to which we could venture to wander.

Having ascertained the route homeward, we pursued it quickly, as we were wont, but less rapidly than Shelley had commenced his hasty retreat. He had perceived that the garden was attached to a gentleman's house, and he had consequently quitted it thus precipitately. I had already observed on the right a winding path that led through a plantation to certain offices, which showed that a house was about a quarter of a mile from the spot where I then stood.

Had I been aware that the garden was connected with a residence, I certainly should not have trespassed upon it; but having entered unconsciously, and since the owner was too far removed to be annoyed by observing the intrusion, I was tempted to remain a short time to examine a spot which, during my brief visit, seemed so singular. The superior and highly sensitive delicacy of my companion instantly took the alarm on discovering indications of a neighbouring mansion: hence his marvellous precipitancy in withdrawing himself from the garnished retirement he had unwittingly penetrated; and we had advanced some distance along the road before he had entirely overcome his modest confusion.

Shelley had looked on the ornate inclosure with a poet's eye, and as we hastily pursued our course towards Oxford by the frozen and sounding way,

whilst the day rapidly declined, he discoursed of it fancifully, and with a more glowing animation than ordinary, like one agitated by a divine fury, and by the impulse of inspiring Deity. He continued, indeed, so long to enlarge upon the marvels of the enchanted grove, that I hinted the enchantress might possibly be at hand, and since he was so eloquent concerning the nest, what would have been his astonishment had he been permitted to see the bird herself.

He sometimes described with a curious fastidiousness the qualities, which a female must possess, to kindle the fire of love in his bosom: the imaginative youth supposed that he was to be moved by the most absolute perfection alone. It is equally impossible to doubt the exquisite refinement of his taste, or the boundless power of the most mighty of divinities; to refuse to believe that he was a just and skilful critic of feminine beauty and grace, and of whatever is attractive, or that he was never practically as blind, at the least, as men of ordinary talent. How sadly should we disparage the triumphs of Love were we to maintain that he is able to lead astray the senses of the vulgar alone!

In the theory of love, however, a poet will rarely err. Shelley's lively fancy had painted a goodly portraiture of the mistress of the fair garden, nor were apt words wanting to convey to me a faithful copy of the bright original. It would be a cruel

injustice to an orator, should a plain man attempt, after a silence of more than twenty years, to revive his glowing harangue from faded recollections; I will not seek, therefore, to pourtray the likeness of the ideal nymph of the flower-garden.

"Since your fairy gardener," I said, "has so completely taken possession of your imagination,"—and he was wonderfully excited by the unexpected scene and his own splendid decorations,—"it is a pity we did not notice the situation, for I am quite sure I should not be able to return thither, to recover your Eden and the Eve, whom you created to till it; and I doubt whether you could guide me."

He acknowledged that he was as incapable of finding it again, as of leading me to that paradise, to which I had compared it.

"You may laugh at my enthusiasm," he continued, "but you must allow that you were not less struck by the singularity of that mysterious corner of the earth than myself; you are equally entitled, therefore, to dwell there, at least in fancy, and to find a partner whose character will harmonise with the genius of the place."

He then declared, that henceforth it should be deemed the possession of two tutelary nymphs, not of one; and he proceeded, with unabated fervour, to delineate the second patroness, and to distinguish her from the first.

"No!" he exclaimed, pausing in the rapid career of words, and for a while he was somewhat troubled, "the seclusion is too sweet, too holy, to be the theatre of ordinary love; the love of the sexes, however pure, still retains some taint of earthly grossness; we must not admit it within the sanctuary."

He was silent for several minutes, and his anxiety visibly increased.

"The love of a mother for her child is more refined; it is more disinterested, more spiritual; but," he added, after some reflection, "the very existence of the child still connects it with the passion, which we have discarded;" and he relapsed into his former musings.

"The love a sister bears towards a sister," he exclaimed abruptly, and with an air of triumph, "is unexceptionable."

The idea pleased him, and as he strode along he assigned the trim garden to two sisters, affirming, with the confidence of an inventor, that it owed its neatness to the assiduous culture of their neat hands; that it was their constant haunt; the care of it their favourite pastime, and its prosperity, next after the welfare of each other, the chief wish of both. He described their appearance, their habits, their feelings, and drew a lovely picture of their amiable and innocent attachment; of the meek and dutiful regard of the younger, which partook, in

some degree, of filial reverence, but was more facile and familiar; and of the protecting, instructing, hoping fondness of the elder, that resembled maternal tenderness, but had less of reserve and more of sympathy. In no other relation could the intimacy be equally perfect; not even between brothers, for their life is less domestic; there is a separation in their pursuits, and an independence in the masculine character. The occupations of all females of the same age and rank are the same, and by night sisters cherish each other in the same quiet nest. Their union wears not only the grace of delicacy, but of fragility also; for it is always liable to be suddenly destroyed by the marriage of either party, or at least to be interrupted and suspended for an indefinite period.

He depicted so eloquently the excellence of sisterly affection, and he drew so distinctly, and so minutely, the image of the two sisters, to whom he chose to ascribe the unusual comeliness of the spot into which we had unintentionally intruded, that the trifling incident has been impressed upon my memory, and has been intimately associated in my mind, through his creations, with his poetic character.

The prince of Roman eloquence affirms, that the good man alone can be a perfect orator,—and truly, for without the weight of a spotless reputation, it is

certain that the most artful and elaborate discourses must want authority, the main ingredient in persuasion.

The position is, at least, equally true of the poet, whose grand strength always lies in the ethical force of his compositions; and these are great in proportion to the efficient greatness of their moral purpose. If, therefore, we would criticise poetry correctly, and from the foundation, it behoves us to examine the morality of the bard.

In no individual, perhaps, was the moral sense ever more completely developed than in Shelley; in no being was the perception of right and of wrong more acute. The biographer who takes upon himself the pleasing and instructive, but difficult and delicate task of composing a faithful history of his whole life, will frequently be compelled to discuss the important questions, whether his conduct, at certain periods, was altogether such as ought to be proposed for imitation; whether he was ever misled by an ardent imagination, a glowing temperament, something of hastiness in choice, and a certain constitutional impatience; whether, like less gifted mortals, he ever shared in the common portion of mortality, —repentance; and to what extent?

Such inquiries, however, do not fall within the compass of a brief narrative of his career at the University. The unmatured mind of a boy is

capable of good intentions only, and of generous and kindly feelings, and these were pre-eminent in him. It will be proper to unfold the excellence of his dispositions, not for the sake of vain and empty praise, but simply to show his aptitude to receive the sweet fury of the Muses.

His inextinguishable thirst for knowledge, his boundless philanthropy, his fearless, it may be, his almost imprudent, pursuit of truth, have been already exhibited. If mercy to beasts be a criterion of a good man, numerous instances of extreme tenderness would demonstrate his worth. I will mention one only.

We were walking one afternoon in Bagley Wood; on turning a corner, we suddenly came upon a boy who was driving an ass. It was very young, and very weak, and was staggering beneath a most disproportionate load of faggots, and he was belabouring its lean ribs angrily and violently with a short, thick, heavy cudgel.

At the sight of cruelty Shelley was instantly transported far beyond the usual measure of excitement: he sprang forward, and was about to interpose with energetic and indignant vehemence. I caught him by the arm, and to his present annoyance held him back, and with much difficulty persuaded him to allow me to be the advocate of the dumb animal. His cheeks glowed with displeasure, and his lips

murmured his impatience during my brief dialogue with the young tyrant.

"That is a sorry little ass, boy," I said; "it seems to have scarcely any strength."

"None at all; it is good for nothing."

"It cannot get on; it can hardly stand; if any body could make it go, you would; you have taken great pains with it."

"Yes, I have; but it is to no purpose!"

"It is of little use striking it, I think."

"It is not worth beating; the stupid beast has got more wood now than it can carry; it can hardly stand, you see!"

"I suppose it put it upon its back itself?"

The boy was silent: I repeated the question.

"No; it has not sense enough for that," he replied, with an incredulous leer.

By dint of repeated blows he had split one end of his cudgel, and the sound caused by the divided portion had alarmed Shelley's humanity: I pointed to it and said, "You have split your stick; it is not good for much now."

He turned it, and held the divided end in his hand.

"The other end is whole, I see; but I suppose you could split that too on the ass's back, if you chose; it is not so thick."

"It is not so thick, but it is full of knots; it

would take a great deal of trouble to split it, and the beast is not worth that; it would do no good!"

"It would do no good, certainly; and if any body saw you, he might say that you were a savage young ruffian, and that you ought to be served in the same manner yourself."

The fellow looked at me with some surprise, and sank into sullen silence.

He presently threw his cudgel into the wood as far as he was able, and began to amuse himself by pelting the birds with pebbles, leaving my long-eared client to proceed at its own pace, having made up his mind, perhaps, to be beaten himself, when he reached home, by a tyrant still more unreasonable than himself, on account of the inevitable default of his ass.

Shelley was satisfied with the result of our conversation, and I repeated to him the history of the injudicious and unfortunate interference of Don Quixote between the peasant, John Haldudo, and his servant, Andrew. Although he reluctantly admitted, that the acrimony of humanity might often aggravate the sufferings of the oppressed by provoking the oppressor, I always observed, that the impulse of generous indignation, on witnessing the infliction of pain, was too vivid to allow him to pause and consider the probable consequences of the abrupt inter-

position of the knight errantry, which would at once redress all grievances. Such exquisite sensibility and a sympathy with suffering so acute and so uncontrolled may possibly be inconsistent with the calmness and forethought of the philosopher, but they accord well with the high temperature of a poet's blood.

As his port had the meekness of a maiden, so the heart of the young virgin who has never crossed her father's threshold to encounter the rude world, could not be more susceptible of all the sweet domestic charities than his: in this respect Shelley's disposition would happily illustrate the innocence and virginity of the Muses.

In most men, and especially in very young men, an excessive addiction to study tends to chill the heart, and to blunt the feelings, by engrossing the attention. Notwithstanding his extreme devotion to literature, and amidst his various and ardent speculations, he retained a most affectionate regard for his relations, and particularly for the females of his family; it was not without manifest joy that he received a letter from his mother, or his sisters.

A child of genius is seldom duly appreciated by the world during his life, least of all by his own kindred. The parents of a man of talent may claim the honour of having given him birth, yet they commonly enjoy but little of his society. Whilst we

hang with delight over the immortal pages, we are apt to suppose that the gifted author was fondly cherished; that a possession so uncommon and so precious was highly prized; that his contemporaries anxiously watched his going out, and eagerly looked for his coming in; for we should ourselves have borne him tenderly in our hands, that he might not dash his foot against a stone. Surely such an one was given in charge to angels, we cry. On the contrary, Nature appears most unaccountably to slight a gift that she gave grudgingly; as if it were of small value, and easily replaced.

An unusual number of books, Greek or Latin classics, each inscribed with the name of the donor, which had been presented to him, according to the custom, on quitting Eton, attested that Shelley had been popular among his schoolfellows. Many of them were then at Oxford, and they frequently called at his rooms: although he spoke of them with regard, he generally avoided their society, for it interfered with his beloved study, and interrupted the pursuits to which he ardently and entirely devoted himself.

In the nine centuries that elapsed from the time of our great founder, Alfred, to our days, there never was a student who more richly merited the favour and assistance of a learned body, or whose fruitful mind would have repaid with a larger

harvest, the labour of careful and judicious cultivation. And such cultivation he was well entitled to receive. Nor did his scholar-like virtues merit neglect; still less to be betrayed, like the young nobles of Falisci, by a traitorous schoolmaster, to an enemy less generous than Camillus. No student ever read more assiduously. He was to be found, book in hand, at all hours; reading in season and out of season; at table, in bed, and especially during a walk; not only in the quiet country, and in retired paths; not only at Oxford, in the public walks, and High Street, but in the most crowded thoroughfares of London. Nor was he less absorbed by the volume that was open before him, in Cheapside, in Cranbourne Alley, or in Bond Street, than in a lonely lane, or a secluded library.

Sometimes a vulgar fellow would attempt to insult or annoy the eccentric student in passing. Shelley always avoided the malignant interruption by stepping aside with his vast and quiet agility.

Sometimes I have observed, as an agreeable contrast to these wretched men, that persons of the humblest station have paused and gazed with respectful wonder as he advanced, almost unconscious of the throng, stooping low, with bent knees and outstretched neck, poring earnestly over the volume, which he extended before him: for they

knew this, although the simple people knew but little, that an ardent scholar is worthy of deference, and that the man of learning is necessarily the friend of humanity, and especially of the many. I never beheld eyes that devoured the pages more voraciously than his: I am convinced that two-thirds of the period of day and night were often employed in reading. It is no exaggeration to affirm, that out of the twenty-four hours, he frequently read sixteen. At Oxford, his diligence in this respect was exemplary, but it greatly increased afterwards, and I sometimes thought that he carried it to a pernicious excess: I am sure, at least, that I was unable to keep pace with him.

On the evening of a wet day, when we had read with scarcely any intermission from an early hour in the morning, I have urged him to lay aside his book. It required some extravagance to rouse him to join heartily in conversation; to tempt him to avoid the chimney-piece, on which commonly he had laid the open volume.

"If I were to read as long as you read, Shelley, my hair and my teeth would be strewed about on the floor, and my eyes would slip down my cheeks into my waistcoat pockets; or at least I should become so weary and nervous that I should not know whether it were so or not."

He began to scrape the carpet with his feet, as if

teeth were actually lying upon it, and he looked fixedly at my face, and his lively fancy represented the empty sockets; his imagination was excited, and the spell that bound him to his books was broken, and, creeping close to the fire, and, as it were, under the fire-place, he commenced a most animated discourse. Few were aware of the extent, and still fewer, I apprehend, of the profundity of his reading; in his short life, and without ostentation, he had, in truth, read more Greek than many an aged pedant, who, with pompous parade, prides himself upon this study alone. Although he had not entered critically into the minute niceties of the noblest of languages, he was thoroughly conversant with the valuable matter it contains. A pocket edition of Plato, of Plutarch, of Euripides, without interpretation or notes, or of the Septuagint, was his ordinary companion; and he read the text straightforward for hours, if not as readily as an English author, at least with as much facility as French, Italian, or Spanish.

"Upon my soul, Shelley, your style of going through a Greek book is something quite beautiful!" was the wondering exclamation of one who was himself no mean student.

As his love of intellectual pursuits was vehement, and the vigour of his genius almost celestial, so were the purity and sanctity of his life most conspicuous.

His food was plain and simple as that of a hermit, with a certain anticipation, even at this time, of a vegetable diet, respecting which he afterwards became an enthusiast in theory, and in practice an irregular votary.

With his usual fondness for moving the abstruse and difficult questions of the highest theology, he loved to inquire, whether man can justify, on the ground of reason alone, the practice of taking the life of the inferior animals, except in the necessary defence of his life and of his means of life, the fruits of that field which he has tilled, from violence and spoliation.

"Not only have considerable sects," he would say, "denied the right altogether, but those among the tender-hearted and imaginative people of antiquity, who accounted it lawful to kill and eat, appear to have doubted, whether they might take away life merely for the use of man alone. They slew their cattle not simply for human guests, like the less scrupulous butchers of modern times, but only as a sacrifice, for the honour and in the name of the Deity; or rather of those subordinate divinities, to whom, as they believed, the Supreme Being had assigned the creation and conservation of the visible material world; as an incident to these pious offerings, they partook of the residue of the victims, of which, without such sanction and sanctification,

they would not have presumed to taste. So reverent was the caution of humane and prudent antiquity!"

Bread became his chief sustenance, when his regimen attained to that austerity which afterwards distinguished it. He could have lived on bread alone without repining. When he was walking in London with an acquaintance, he would suddenly run into a baker's shop, purchase a supply, and breaking a loaf, he would offer half of it to his companion.

"Do you know," he said to me one day, with much surprise, "that such an one does not like bread? Did you ever know a person who disliked bread?" and he told me that a friend had refused such an offer.

I explained to him, that the individual in question probably had no objection to bread in a moderate quantity, at a proper time and with the usual adjuncts, and was only unwilling to devour two or three pounds of dry bread in the streets, and at an early hour.

Shelley had no such scruple; his pockets were generally well-stored with bread. A circle upon the carpet, clearly defined by an ample verge of crumbs, often marked the place where he had long sat at his studies, his face nearly in contact with his book, greedily devouring bread at intervals amidst

his profound abstractions. For the most part he took no condiment; sometimes, however, he ate with his bread the common raisins which are used in making puddings, and these he would buy at little mean shops.

He was walking one day in London with a respectable solicitor, who occasionally transacted business for him; with his accustomed precipitation he suddenly vanished, and as suddenly reappeared; he had entered the shop of a little grocer in an obscure quarter, and had returned with some plums, which he held close under the attorney's nose, and the man of fact was as much astonished at the offer, as his client, the man of fancy, at the refusal.

The common fruit of stalls, and oranges and apples, were always welcome to Shelley; he would crunch the latter as heartily as a schoolboy. Vegetables, and especially salads, and pies and puddings, were acceptable: his beverage consisted of copious and frequent draughts of cold water, but tea was ever grateful, cup after cup, and coffee. Wine was taken with singular moderation, commonly diluted largely with water, and for a long period he would abstain from it altogether; he avoided the use of spirits almost invariably, and even in the most minute portions.

Like all persons of simple tastes, he retained his

sweet tooth; he would greedily eat cakes, gingerbread, and sugar; honey, preserved or stewed fruit, with bread, were his favourite delicacies, these he thankfully and joyfully received from others, but he rarely sought for them, or provided them for himself. The restraint and protracted duration of a convivial meal were intolerable; he was seldom able to keep his seat during the brief period assigned to an ordinary family dinner.

These particulars may seem trifling, if indeed anything can be little that has reference to a character truly great; but they prove how much he was ashamed that his soul was in body, and illustrate the virgin abstinence of a mind equally favoured by the Muses, the Graces, and Philosophy. It is true, however, that his application at Oxford, although exemplary, was not so unremitting as it afterwards became; nor was his diet, although singularly temperate, so meagre; however, his mode of living already offered a foretaste of the studious seclusion and absolute renunciation of every luxurious indulgence which ennobled him a few years later.

Had a parent desired that his children should be exactly trained to an ascetic life, and should be taught by an eminent example to scorn delights and to live laborious days; that they should behold a pattern of native innocence and genuine simplicity of manners; he would have consigned them to his

house as to a temple, or to some primitive and still unsophisticated monastery.

It is an invidious thing to compose a perpetual panegyric, yet it is difficult to speak of Shelley, and impossible to speak justly, without often praising him; it is difficult also to divest myself of later recollections; to forget for a while what he became in days subsequent, and to remember only what he then was, when we were fellow-collegians. It is difficult, moreover, to view him with the mind which I then bore, —with a young mind; to lay aside the seriousness of old age; for twenty years of assiduous study have induced, if not in the body, at least within, something of premature old age.

It now seems an incredible thing, and altogether inconceivable, when I consider the gravity of Shelley and his invincible repugnance to the comic, that the monkey tricks of the schoolboy could have still lingered, but it is certain that some slight vestiges still remained. The metaphysician of eighteen actually attempted once or twice to electrify the son of his scout, a boy like a sheep, by name James, who roared aloud with ludicrous and stupid terror, whenever Shelley affected to bring by stealth any part of his philosophical apparatus near to him.

As Shelley's health and strength were visibly augmented, if by accident he was obliged to accept a more generous diet than ordinary, and as his mind

sometimes appeared to be exhausted by never ending toil, I often blamed his abstinence and his perpetual application. It is the office of an University, of a public institution for education, not only to apply the spur to the sluggish, but also to rein in the young steed, that, being too mettlesome, hastens with undue speed towards the goal.

"It is a very odd thing, but every woman can live with my lord and do just what she pleases with him, except my lady!" Such was the shrewd remark, which a long familiarity taught an old and attached servant to utter respecting his master, a noble poet.

We may wonder in like manner, and deeply lament, that the most docile, the most facile, the most pliant, the most confiding creature, that ever was led through any of the various paths on earth; that a tractable youth, who was conducted at pleasure by anybody that approached him,—it might be occasionally by persons delegated by no legitimate authority,—was never guided for a moment by those upon whom, fully and without reservation, that most solemn and sacred obligation had been imposed, strengthened moreover by every public and private, official and personal, moral, political and religious tie, which the civil polity of a long succession of ages could accumulate. Had the University been in fact, as in name, a kind nursing mother to the

most gifted of her sons; to one, who seemed to those that knew him best—

Heaven's exile straying from the orb of light;

had that most awful responsibility, the right institution of those, to whom are to be consigned the government of the country and the conservation of whatever good human society has elaborated and excogitated, duly weighed upon the consciences of his instructors, they would have gained his entire confidence by frank kindness, they would have repressed his too eager impatience to master the sum of knowledge, they would have mitigated the rigorous austerity of his course of living, and they would have remitted the extreme tension of his soul by reconciling him to liberal mirth; convincing him that, if life be not wholly a jest, there are at least many comic scenes occasionally interspersed in the great drama. Nor is the last benefit of trifling importance, for, as an unseemly and excessive gravity is usually the sign of a dull fellow, so is the prevalence of this defect the characteristic of an unlearned and illiberal age.

Shelley was actually offended, and indeed more indignant than would appear to be consistent with the singular mildness of his nature, at a coarse and awkward jest, especially if it were immodest, or uncleanly; in the latter case his anger was un-

bounded, and his uneasiness pre-eminent; he was, however, sometimes vehemently delighted by exquisite and delicate sallies, particularly with a fanciful, and perhaps somewhat fantastical, facetiousness, —possibly the more because he was himself utterly incapable of pleasantry.

In every free state, in all countries that enjoy republican institutions, the view, which each citizen takes of politics, is an essential ingredient in the estimate of his ethical character. The wisdom of a very young man is but foolishness; nevertheless, if we would rightly comprehend the moral and intellectual constitution of the youthful poet, it will be expedient to take into account the manner in which he was affected towards the grand political questions, at a period when the whole of the civilised world was agitated by a fierce storm of excitement, that, happily for the peace and well-being of society, is of rare occurrence.

CHAPTER IV.

ONE morning, a few days after I made Shelley's acquaintance, I was at his rooms, and we were reading together, two Etonians called on him, as they were wont to do; they remained a short time conversing with him.

"Do you mean to be an Atheist here, too, Shelley?" one of them inquired.

"No!" he answered, "certainly not. There is no motive for it; there would be no use in it; they are very civil to us here; they never interfere with us; it is not like Eton."

To this they both assented. When his visitors were gone, I asked him what they meant. He told me that at Eton he had been called Shelley the Atheist; and he explained to me the true signification of the epithet. This is the substance of his explanation:—

All persons who are familiar with public schools, are well aware that there is a set of nicknames, many of them denoting offices, as the Pope, the

Bishop, the Major, the General, the Governor, and the like, and these are commonly filled by successive generations. At Eton, but at no other school, that I ever heard of, they had the name and office of Atheist; but this usually was not full, it demanded extraordinary daring to attain to it; it was commonly in commission, as it were, and the youths of the greatest hardihood might be considered as boys commissioners for executing the office of Lord High Atheist.

Shelley's predecessor had filled the office some years before his time; he also was called Blank the Atheist, we must say, for I have forgotten his name. The act of Atheism, in virtue of which he obtained the title, was gross, flagrant, and downright.

A huge bunch of grapes, richly gilded, hung in front of "The Christopher," as the sign, or in aid of the sign, of the inn. This the profane young wretch took down one dark winter's night, and suspended at the door of the head-master of his day. In the morning, when he rushed out in the twilight to go to chapel, being habitually too late, and always in a hurry, he ran full butt against the bunch of grapes, which was at least as big as himself, a little man. From this it is evident that the word Atheist was used by the learned at Eton, not in a modern, but in an ancient and classical sense, meaning an Antitheist, rather than an Atheist; for an opposer

and contemner of the gods, not one who denies their existence.

Capaneus, Salmoneus, the Cyclops, and the other strong spirits of the olden time, were termed ἄθεοι, because they insulted and defied their deities; not because they doubted, or denied, that they existed.

The gods of Eton were the authorities of the school; nobody ever denied the existence of Old Keate, but many a lad of pluck did everything in his power to torment the old boy; and amongst these Shelley was conspicuous; he held the fulminating Jove in scorn, and despised his birchen thunderbolts.

It was for contumaciously setting the old tree on fire, of which we have spoken, that he first obtained the full title of Shelley the Atheist, which he held and enjoyed so long as he remained at school.

Two or three Eton boys called another day, and begged their former schoolfellow to curse his father and the king, as he used occasionally to do at school. Shelley refused, and for some time persisted in his refusal, saying that he had left it off; but as they continued to urge him, by reason of their importunity he suddenly broke out, and delivered, with vehemence and animation, a string of execrations, greatly resembling in its absurdity a papal anathema; the fulmination soon terminated in a

hearty laugh, in which we all joined. When we were alone, I said:

"Why, you young reprobate, who in the world taught you to curse your father—your own father?"

"My grandfather, Sir Bysshe, partly; but principally my friend, Dr. Lind, at Eton. When anything goes wrong at Field Place, my father does nothing but swear all day long afterwards. Whenever I have gone with my father to visit Sir Bysshe, he always received him with a tremendous oath, and continued to heap curses upon his head so long as he remained in the room."

Sir Bysshe being Ogygian, gouty, and bed-ridden, the poor old baronet had become excessively testy and irritable; and a request for money instantly aggravated and inflamed every symptom, moved his choler, and stirred up his bile, impelling him irresistibly to alleviate his sufferings by the roundest oaths.

The grandson gave me some choice specimens of his grandfather's male and nervous eloquence in that peculiar department of oratory. Dr. Lind communicated to Shelley a taste for chemistry and chemical experiments, as has been before stated; the mild, the amiable, the gentle Dr. Lind, also taught his young pupil how to deal damnation round the land.

Shelley invariably spoke with respect, regard, and

gratitude of Dr. Lind, and of the injuries which the Doctor had received, whatever they might be, with indignant sympathy. He used to go to tea with the meek and benevolent physician at Eton; and after tea they used to curse King George the Third, for the Doctor had really been, or firmly believed that he had been, cruelly wronged by that pious and domestic, but obstinate and impracticable, monarch.

After a light and digestible repast of tea—made by the daughter, or niece, of the Doctor, with a proper regard, doubtless, for the nervous system, and of bread and butter prepared upon sanatory principles, the butter being thinly superinduced upon bread, the stalest that could be procured, or of the same bread lightly toasted, and to be taken without any condiment—the execrations began.

After the salubrious meal, the good old Doctor proceeded solemnly to launch the greater excommunication against the father of his people, who, he thought, had acted like a step-father to himself, and the rest joined in the condemnatory rite: in what precise form of words Miss Lind chimed in, I never heard. From cursing the father of his people, it was an easy and natural transition to curse his own natural father.

The diræ, as they were recited before me once, and once only, were of a peculiar character, differ-

ing much from ordinary execrations, and they operated, if at all, demoniacally, by devoting their object to the evil spirits and infernal gods; whatever else might be the effect of these curses, they certainly did not shorten life, either in the case of the excommunicated monarch, or of his liege man, old Timotheus. The denunciations at Oxford were plainly a joke; of the estimable, but angry Doctor's vehement scolding, without having heard him, it would be unfair to form any judgment. Shelley had a decided inclination for magic, demonology, incantations, raising the dead, evoking spirits and devils, seeing ghosts, and chatting familiarly with apparitions, which led him to interesting reading, and curious and amusing investigations; it is probable that he picked up, or improved, these medieval fancies at the physician's sober board. One thing at least is certain, the denial of the existence of gods, and devils, and spirits, if it was to be found in him at all, was only to be found in his words and arguments: practically, his turn of mind was towards superstition, by no means towards irreligion and materialism.

Field Place, *Dec.* 20, 1810.

My dear Friend,

The moment which announces your residence, I write. There is now need of all my art; I must resort to deception.

My father called on S. in London, who has converted him to sanctity. He mentioned my name, as a supporter of sceptical principles. My father wrote to me, and I am now surrounded, environed by dangers, to which compared the devils, who besieged St. Anthony, were all inefficient. They attack me for my detestable principles; I am reckoned an outcast; yet I defy them, and laugh at their ineffectual efforts.

S. will no longer do for me; I am at a loss whom to select. S.'s skull is very thick, but I am afraid that he will not believe my assertion; indeed, should it gain credit with him, should he accept the offer of publication, there exist numbers who will find out, or imagine, a real tendency; and booksellers possess more power than we are aware of in impeding the sale of any book, containing opinions displeasing to them. I am disposed to offer it to Wilkie and Robinson, Paternoster Row, and to take it there myself; they published Godwin's works, and it is scarcely possible to suppose that any one, layman or clergyman, will assert that these support Gospel doctrines. If that will not do, I must print it myself. Oxford, of course, would be most convenient for the correction of the press.

Mr. L.'s principles are not *very* severe; he is more a votary to Mammon than God.

O! I burn with impatience for the moment of

the dissolution of intolerance; it has injured me. I swear on the altar of perjured Love to revenge myself on the hated cause of the effect, which *even now* I can scarcely help deploring. Indeed, I think it is to the benefit of society to destroy the opinions which can annihilate the dearest of its ties. Inconveniences would now result from my *owning* the novel, which I have in preparation for the press. I give out, therefore, that I will publish no more; every one here, but the select few who enter into its schemes, believe my assertion. I will stab the wretch in secret. Let us hope that the wound which I inflict, though the dagger be concealed, will rankle in the heart of the adversary.

My father wished to withdraw me from college: I would not consent to it. There lowers a terrific tempest, but I stand, as it were, on a pharos, and smile exultingly at the vain beating of the billows below.

So much for egotism!

Your poetry pleases me very much; the idea is beautiful, but I hope that the contrast is not from nature. The verses on the Dying Gladiator are good, but they seem composed in a hurry. I am composing a *satirical* poem; I shall print it at Oxford, unless I find, on visiting him, that R. is ripe for printing whatever will sell. In case of that, he is my man.

It is not William Godwin, who lives in Holborn: it is *John*, no relation to the other.

As to W., I wrote to him when in London, by way of a gentle alterative. He promised to write to me when he had time, seemed surprised at what I said, yet directed to me as the Reverend: his amazement must be extreme.

I shall not read Bishop Prettyman, or any more of them, unless I have some particular reason. Bigots will not argue; it destroys the very nature of the thing to argue; it is contrary to *faith*. How, therefore, could you suppose that one of these *liberal* gentlemen would listen to scepticism, on the subject even of St. Athanasius's sweeping anathema?

I have something else to tell you, and I will in another letter.

Love! dearest, sweetest power! how much are we indebted to thee! How much superior are even thy miseries to the pleasures which arise from other sources! How much superior to "fat, contented ignorance" is even the agony which thy votaries experience! Yes, my friend, I am now convinced that a monarchy is the only form of government (in a certain degree) which a lover ought to live under. Yet in this alone is subordination necessary. *Man* is equal, and I am convinced that equality will be the attendant on a more advanced and ameliorated state of society. But this is assertion, not proof,—

indeed, there can be none, then you will say; excuse my believing it; willingly.

St. Irvyne is come out; it is sent to you at Mr. Daxrell's; you can get one in London by mentioning my name to Stockdale; you need not state your own, and as names are not *now* inscribed on the front of every existing creature, you run no risk of discovery in person, if it be a crime, or a sin, to procure my Novel.

How can you fancy that I shall ever think you mad; am not I the wildest, the most delirious of enthusiasm's offspring? On one subject I am cool, toleration; yet that coolness alone possesses me, that I may with more certainty guide the spear to the breast of my adversary, with more certainty ensanguine it with the heart's blood of Intolerance, hated name!

Adieu! Down with Bigotry! Down with Intolerance! In this endeavour your most sincere friend will join his every power, his every feeble resource. Adieu!

To T. J. H.
Lincoln's Inn Fields.

FIELD PLACE, *Dec.* 23, 1810.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The first desire which I felt on receiving your letters, was instantly to come to London, that a friend might sympathise in those sorrows, which

are beyond alleviation. That I cannot do this week; on Sunday or Monday next I will come, if you still remain in town.

Why will you add to the never dying remorse, which my egotising folly has occasioned, for which, so long as its fatal effects remain, never can I forgive myself, by accusing yourself of a feeling, as intrusive, which I cannot but regard as another part of that amiability, which has marked your character since first I had the happiness of your friendship. Where exists the moral wrong of seeking the society of one, whom I loved? what offence to reason, to virtue, was there in desiring the communication of a lengthened correspondence, in order that both, she and myself, might see, if by coincidence of intellect we were willing to enter into a closer, an eternal union? No, it is no offence to reason, or virtue; it is obeying its most imperious dictates, it is complying with the designs of the Author of our nature: can this be immorality? Can it be selfishness, or interested ambition, to seek the happiness of the object of attachment? I am sure, your own judgment, your own reason, must answer in the negative. Let me now ask you, what reason was there then for *despair*, even supposing my love to have been incurable?

Her disposition was in all probability divested of the enthusiasm by which mine is characterised,

could therefore hers be prophetic? She might not be susceptible of that feeling, which arises from an admiration of virtue, when abstracted from identity.

My sister attempted sometimes to plead my cause, but unsuccessfully. She said:—

"Even supposing I take your representation of your brother's qualities and sentiments, which as you coincide in and admire, I may fairly imagine to be exaggerated, although *you* may not be aware of the exaggeration; what right have *I*, admitting that he is so superior, to enter into an intimacy, which must end in delusive disappointment, when he finds how really inferior I am to the being which his heated imagination has pictured."

This was unanswerable, particularly as the prejudiced description of a sister, who loves her brother as she does, might, indeed *must*, have given to her an erroneously exalted idea of the superiority of my mental attainments.

You have said, that the philosophy, which I pursued, is not uncongenial with the strictest morality; you must see, that it militates with the received opinions of the world; that, therefore, does it offend; but prejudice and superstition, that superstitious bigotry, inspired by the system upon which at present the world acts, of believing all that we are told as incontrovertible facts.

I hope, that what I have said will induce you to

allow me still, and all the more, to remain your friend.

I hope, that you will soon have an opportunity of seeing, of conversing, with Elizabeth.

How sorry I am that I cannot invite you here now. I will tell you the reason when we meet. Believe me, my dear friend, when I assert, that I shall *ever* continue so to you. *I* have reason to lament deeply the sorrows with which fate has marked my life; I am not so deeply debased by it, however, that the exertions for the happiness of my friend shall supersede considerations of narrower and selfish interest, but that his woes should claim a sigh before one repining thought arose at my own lot. I know the cause of all human disappointment, —worldly prejudice; mine is the same, I know also its origin,—bigotry.

Adieu! Write again. Believe me your most sincere friend. Adieu!

P. B. S.

To T. J. H.,
Lincoln's Inn Fields.

FIELD PLACE, *Dec.* 26, 1810.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Why do you express yourself so flatteringly grateful to me, when I ought to experience that sensation towards you in the highest manner, of which our nature is capable? Why do you yet

suppose, that you have offended against any of those rules for our conduct which we ought to regard with veneration?

What is delicacy? Come, I must be severe with myself, I must irritate the wound which I wish to heal.

Supposing the object of my affections does not regard me, how have you transgressed against its dictates; in what have you offended? What is delicacy? Let us define it, in the light in which you take it. I conceive it to be that inherent repugnance to injuring others, particularly as regarding the objects of their dearer preference, which beings of superior intelligence feel. In what then, let me ask again, if I do not think you culpable, in what, then, have you offended? Tell me, then, my dear friend, no more of sorrow, no more of remorse, at what you have said. Circumstances have operated in such a manner, that the attainment of the object of my heart was impossible, whether on account of extraneous influences, or from a feeling which possessed her mind, which told her *not* to deceive another, not to give him the possibility of disappointment. I feel I touch the string, which, if vibrated, excites acute pain, but *truth* and my real feelings, which I wish to give you a clear idea of, overcome my resolve never to speak on the subject again. It is with reluctance to my own feelings

that I have entered into this cold disquisition, when your heart sympathises so deeply in my affliction; but for Heaven's sake consider, and do not criminate yourself, do not wrong the motives, which actuated you upon so feeble a ground, as that of *delicacy*. I do this, I say this, in justice as well as friendship; I demand that you should do *justice* to yourself, then no more is required to give you at all events a consciousness of rectitude.

I read most of your letters to my sister; she frequently inquires after you, and we talk of you often. I do not wish to awaken her intellect too powerfully; this must be my apology for not communicating all my speculations to her. Thanks, *truly* thanks for opening your heart to me, for telling me your feelings towards me. Dare I do the same to you? I dare not to myself, how can I to another, perfect as he may be? I dare not even to God, whose mercy is great. My unhappiness is excessive; but I will cease; I will no more speak in riddles, but now quit for *ever* a subject which awakens too powerful susceptibilities for even negative misery. But that which injured me shall perish! I even now by anticipation hear the expiring yell of intolerance! Pardon me! My sorrows are not so undeserved as you believe; they are obtrusive to narrate to myself; they must be so to you. Let me wish you an eternity of happiness! I wish you knew Elizabeth,

she is a great consolation to me; but if all be well, my wishes on that score will soon be accomplished. On Monday night you will see me. I cannot bear to suffer alone. Adieu! I have scarce a moment's time, only to tell you how sincerely I am your friend.

To T. J. H.,
Lincoln's Inn Fields, London.

FIELD PLACE, *Dec.* 28, 1810.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The encomium of one incapable of flattery is indeed flattering. Your discrimination of that chapter is more just than the praises which you bestow on so unconnected a thing as the romance taken collectively. I wish you very much to publish a tale; send one to a publisher. Oh, here we are in the midst of all the uncongenial jollities of Christmas, when you are compelled to contribute to the merriment of others—when you are compelled to live under the severest of all restraints, concealment of feelings pregnant enough in themselves, how terrible is your lot! I am learning abstraction, but I fear that my proficiency will be but trifling. I cannot, dare not, speak of myself. Why do you still continue to say, Do not despond, that you must not despair?

I admit that this despair would be unauthorised, when it was rational to suppose, that at some future

time mutual knowledge would awaken reciprocity of feeling.

Your letter arrived at a moment when I could least bear any additional excitement of feelings. I have succeeded now in calming my mind, but at first I knew not how to act; indecision and a fear of injuring another, by complying with what perhaps were the real wishes of my bosom, distracted me. I do not tell you this by way of confession of my own state, for I believe that I may not be sufficiently aware of what I feel myself, even to own it to myself. Believe me, my dear friend, that my only ultimate wishes *now* are for your happiness and that of my sisters. At present a thousand barriers oppose any more intimate connexion, any union with another, which, although unnatural and fettering to a virtuous mind, are nevertheless unconquerable.

I will, if possible, come to London on Monday, certainly some time next week. I shall come about six o'clock, and will remain with you until that time the next morning, when I will tell you my reasons for wishing to return. Adieu. Excuse the shortness of this, as the servant waits. I will write on Sunday.

Yours most sincerely.

To T. J. H., London.

FIELD PLACE, *Jan.* 2, 1811.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I cannot come to London before next week. I am but just returned to Field Place from an inefficient effort. Why do you, my happy friend, tell me of perfection in love? Is she not gone? And yet I breathe, I live! But adieu to egotism; I am sick to death at the name of *self*. Oh, your theory cost me much reflection; I have not ceased to think of it since your letter came, which was put into my hands at the moment of departure on Sunday morning. Is it not, however, founded on that *hateful* principle? Is it *self* which you propose to raise to a state of superiority by your system of eternal perfectibility in love? No! Were this frame rendered eternal, were the particles which compose it, both as to intellect and matter, indestructible, and then to undergo torments such as now we should shudder to think of, even in a dream,—to undergo this, I say, for the extension of happiness to those for whom we feel a vivid preference; then would I love, adore, idolise your theory—wild, unfounded as it might be: but no. I can conceive neither of these to be correct, considering matters in a philosophical light, it evidently appears (if it is not treason to speak thus coolly on a subject so deliriously ecstatic) that we were not destined for misery. What, then, shall happiness arise from?

Can we hesitate? Love, dear love, and though every mental faculty is bewildered by the agony, which is in this life its too constant attendant, still is not that very agony to be preferred to the most thrilling sensualities of epicurism?

I have wandered in the snow, for I am cold, wet, and mad. Pardon me, pardon my delirious egotism; this really shall be the last. My sister is well; I fear she is not quite happy on my account, but is much more cheerful than she was some days ago. I hope you will publish a tale; I shall then give a copy to Elizabeth, unless *you* forbid it. I would do it not only to show her what your ideas are on the subject of works of imagination, and to interest her, but that she should see her brother's friend in a new point of view. When you examine her character, you will find humanity, not divinity, amiable as the former may sometimes be: however, I, a brother, must not write treason against my sister; so I will check my volubility. Do not direct your next letter to Field Place, only to Horsham. To-morrow I will write more connectedly.

Yours sincerely.

To T. J. H.,
Lincoln's Inn Fields, London.

FIELD PLACE, *Jan.* 3, 1811.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Before we deny or believe the existence of

anything, it is necessary that we should have a tolerably clear idea of what it is. The word "God," a vague word, has been, and will continue to be, the source of numberless errors, until it is erased from the nomenclature of philosophy. Does it not imply "the soul of the universe, the intelligent and *necessarily* beneficient, actuating principle." This it is impossible not to believe in, I may not be able to adduce proofs; but, I think, that the leaf of a tree, the meanest insect on which we trample, are, in themselves, arguments more conclusive than any which can be advanced, that some vast intellect animates infinity. If we disbelieve *this*, the strongest argument in support of the existence of a future state instantly becomes annihilated. I confess that I think Pope's—

"All are but parts of one stupendous whole,"

something more than poetry. It has ever been my favourite theory, for the immoral soul, "never to be able to die, never to escape from some shrine as chilling as the clay-formed dungeon which now it inhabits;" it is the future punishment which I can most easily believe in.

Love, love, *infinite in extent*, eternal in duration, yet (allowing your theory in that point), perfectible, should be the reward; but can we suppose that this reward will arise, spontaneously, as a necessary

appendage to our nature, or that our nature itself could be without cause — a first cause, — a God? When do we see effects arise without causes? What causes are there without correspondent effects? Yet here, I swear—and as I break my oaths, may Infinity, Eternity blast me—here I swear, that never will I forgive intolerance! It is the only point on which I allow myself to encourage revenge; every moment shall be devoted to my object, which I can spare; and let me hope that it will not be a blow which spends itself, and leaves the wretch at rest, — but lasting, long revenge! I am convinced, too, that it is of great disservice to society,—that it encourages prejudices, which strike at the root of the dearest, the tenderest, of its ties. Oh! how I wish I were the avenger!—that it were mine to crush the demon; to hurl him to his native hell, never to rise again, and thus to establish for ever perfect and universal toleration. I expect to gratify some of this insatiable feeling in poetry. You shall see—you shall hear—how it has injured me. She is no longer mine! she abhors me as a sceptic, as what *she* was before! Oh, bigotry! When I pardon this last, this severest of thy persecutions, may Heaven (if there be wrath in Heaven) blast me! Has vengeance, in its armoury of wrath, a punishment more dreadful? Yet, forgive me, I have done; and were it not for your great desire to know *why* I consider myself as

the victim of severer anguish, that I could have entered into this brief recital.

I am afraid there is selfishness in the passion of love, for I cannot avoid feeling every instant as if my soul was bursting; but I *will* feel no more! It is selfish. I would feel for others, but for myself—oh! how much rather would I expire in the struggle! Yes, that were a relief! Is suicide wrong? I slept with a loaded pistol and some poison, last night, but did not die. I could not come on Monday, my sister would not part with me; but I must,—I will see you soon. My sister is now comparatively happy; she has felt deeply for me. Had it not been for her—had it not been for a sense of what I owed to her, to *you*, I should have bidden you a final farewell some time ago. But can the dead feel; dawns any day-beam on the night of dissolution?

Pray publish your tale; demand one hundred pounds for it from any publisher;—he will give it in the event. It is delightful, it is divine—not that I like your heroine—but the poor Mary is a character worthy of Heaven. I adore her!

Adieu, my dear friend. Your sincere,

P. B. S.

W—— has written. I have read his letter. It is too long to answer. I continue to dissipate Elizabeth's melancholy by keeping her, as much as

possible, employed in poetry. You shall see some to-morrow. I cannot tell you when I can come to town. I wish it very much.

To T. J. H., London.

FIELD PLACE, *Jan.* 6, 1811.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Dare I request *one* favour for *myself*—for my own sake? not the keenest anguish which the most unrelenting tyrant could invent, should force me to request from you so great a sacrifice of friendship. It is a beloved sister's happiness which forces me to this. She saw me when I received your letter of yesterday. She saw the conflict of my soul. At first she said nothing; and then she exclaimed, "Re-direct it, and send it instantly to the post!" Believe me, I feel far more than I will *allow* myself to express, for the cruel disappointments which I have undergone. Write to me whatever you wish to say; you may say what you will on *other* subjects; but on *that* I dare not even read what you would write. *Forget* her? What would I not have given up to have been thus happy? I thought I knew the means by which it might have been effected. Yet I consider what a female sacrifices when she returns the attachment even of one whose faith she supposes inviolable. Hard is the agony which is indescribable, which is only to be felt. Will she not encounter the oppro-

brium of the world; and what is more severe (generally speaking) the dereliction and contempt of those who, before, had avowed themselves most attached to her. I did not encourage the remotest suspicion. I was convinced of her truth, as I was of my own existence. Still was it not *natural* in her, even although she might return the most enthusiastic prepossessions arising from the consciousness of intellectual sympathy, ignorant, as she was, of *some* of my opinions, of my sensations (for *unlimited* confidence is requisite for the existence of mutual love) to have some doubts,—some fears? Besides, when in her natural character, her spirits are good, her conversation animated, and she was almost, in consequence ignorant of the refinements in love, which can only be attained by solitary reflexion. Forsake her! Forsake one whom I loved! Can I? never! But she is gone—she is lost to me for ever; for ever! There is a mystery which I dare not to clear up; it is the only point on which I will be reserved to you. I have tried the methods you would have recommended. I followed her. I would have followed her to the end of the earth, but —— If you value the little happiness, which yet remains, do not mention again to me, sorrows which, if you could share in, would wound a heart, which it now shall be my endeavour to heal of those pains, which, through sympathy with me, it has already

suffered. I will crush Intolerance. I will, at least, attempt it. To fail even in so useful an attempt were glorious!

I inclose some poetry:—

Oh! take the pure gem to where southerly breezes,
Waft repose to some bosom as faithful as fair,
In which the warm current of love never freezes,
As it rises unmingled with selfishness there,
Which, untainted by pride, unpolluted by care,
Might dissolve the dim icedrop, might bid it arise,
Too pure for these regions, to gleam in the skies.

Or where the stern warrior, his country defending,
Dares fearless the dark-rolling battle to pour,
Or o'er the fell corpse of a dread tyrant bending,
Where patriotism red with his guilt-reeking gore
Plants liberty's flag on the slave-peopled shore,
With victory's cry, with the shout of the free,
Let it fly, taintless spirit, to mingle with thee.

For I found the pure gem, when the daybeam returning,
Ineffectual gleams on the snow-covered plain,
When to others the wished-for arrival of morning
Brings relief to long visions of soul-racking pain;
But regret is an insult—to grieve is in vain:
And why should we grieve that a spirit so fair
Seeks Heaven to mix with its own kindred there?

But still 'twas some spirit of kindness descending
To share in the load of mortality's woe,
Who over thy lowly-built sepulchre bending
Bade sympathy's tenderest tear-drop to flow.
Not for *thee*, soft compassion, celestials did know,
But if *angels* can weep, sure *man* may repine,
May weep in mute grief o'er thy low-laid shrine.

And did I then say, for the altar of glory,
That the earliest, the loveliest of flowers I'd entwine,
Tho' with millions of blood-reeking victims 'twas gory,

Tho' the tears of the widow polluted its shrine,
Tho' around it the orphans, the fatherless pine?
Oh! Fame, all thy glories I'd yield for a tear
To shed on the grave of a heart so sincere.

I am very cold this morning, so you must excuse bad writing, as I have been most of the night pacing a churchyard. I must now engage in scenes of strong interest.

You see the subject of the foregoing. I send it, because it may amuse you. Your letter has just arrived; I will send W——'s to University, when I can collect them. If it amuses you, you can answer him; if not, I will.

I will consider your argument against the Non-existence of a Deity. Do you allow, that some *supernatural* power actuates the organisation of physical causes? It is evident so far as this, that if *power* and *wisdom* are employed in the continual arrangement of these affairs, that this power, &c., is something out of the comprehension of man, as he now exists; at least if we allow, that the soul is *not* matter. Then admitting, that this actuating principle is such as I have described, admitting it to be finite, there must be something beyond this, which influences *its* actions and all this series advancing, as if it does in one instance, it must to infinity, must at last terminate, if it can terminate, in the existence, which may be called a Deity. And *if* this Deity

thus influences the actions of the Spirits (if I may be allowed the expression), which take care of minor events (supposing your theory to be true), why is it *not* the soul of the Universe; in what is it not analogous to the soul of man? Why *too* is *not* gravitation the soul of a clock? I entertain no doubt of the fact, although it possesses no capabilities of variation; if the principle of life (that of reason put out of the question, as in the cases of dogs, horses, and oysters) be *soul*, then gravitation is as much the soul of a clock, as animation is that of an oyster. I think we may not inaptly define *Soul*, as the most supreme, superior, and distinguished abstract appendage to the nature of anything.

But I will write again: my head is rather dizzy to-day, on account of not taking rest, and a slight attack of typhus. Adieu! I will write soon.

Your sincerest,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

To T. J. H.,
University College, Oxford.

FIELD PLACE, *Jan.* 11, 1811.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I will not now consider your little Essay, which arrived this morning; I wait till to-morrow. It coincides exactly with Elizabeth's sentiments on the subject, to whom I read it; indeed it has con-

vinced her, although from my having a great deal to do to-day, I cannot listen to so full an exposition of her sentiments on the subject, as I would wish to send you. I shall write to you to-morrow on this matter; and if you clear up some doubts, which yet remain, dissipate some hopes relative to the perfectibility of man generally considered, as well as individually, I will willingly submit to the system, which at present I cannot but strongly reprobate.

How can I find words to express my thanks for such generous conduct with regard to my sister with talents and attainments, such as you possess, to promise what I ought not perhaps to have required, what nothing but a dear sister's intellectual improvement could have induced me to demand. What can I say on the subject of your letter concerning Elizabeth? is it not dictated by the most generous and disinterested of human motives? I have not shown it to her yet, I need not explain the reason. On this point you know all.

There is only one affair, of which I will make the least cloud of mystery; it is the only point on which I will be a solitary being! To be solitary, to be reserved in communicating pain, surely cannot be criminal; it cannot be contrary to the strictest duties of friendship.

She is gone! She is lost to me for ever! She

is married! Married to a clod of earth; she will become as insensible herself; all those fine capabilities will moulder!

Let us speak no more on the subject. Do not deprive me of the little remains of peace, which yet linger; that which arises from endeavours to make others happy!

The Poetry, which I sent you, alluded not to the subject of my nonsensical ravings. I hope that you are now publishing one of your tales. L—— would do it, as well as any one; if you do not choose to publish a book at Oxford, you can print it there; and I will *engage* to dispose of five hundred copies. S—— professes to be acquainted with your family; *hinc illæ lacrymæ!* I attempted to enlighten my father, *mirabile dictu!* He for a time listened to my arguments; he allowed the impossibility (considered abstractedly) of any preternatural interferences by Providence. He allowed the utter incredibility of witches, ghosts, legendary miracles. But when I came to *apply* the truths, on which we had agreed so harmoniously, he started at the bare idea of some facts generally believed, never having existed, and silenced me with an Equine argument, in effect with these words:—"I believe, because I do believe."

My mother imagines me to be in the high road to Pandemonium, she fancies I want to make

a deistical coterie of all my little sisters: how laughable!

You must be very solitary at Oxford; I wish I could come there now; but for reasons, which I will tell you at meeting, it is delayed for a fortnight. I have a Poem with Mr. L——, which I shall certainly publish; there is some of Elizabeth's in it. I will write to-morrow. I have something to add to it, and if L—— has any idea, when he speaks to you of publishing it with my name, will you tell him to leave it alone till I come?

Yes! the arms of Britannia victorious are bearing
  Fame, triumph, and glory, wherever they speed,
Her Lion his crest o'er the nations is rearing.
  Ruin follows, it tramples the dying and dead,
Thy countrymen fall, the blood-reeking bed
  Of the battle-slain sends a complaint-breathing sigh,
  It is mixed with the shoutings of Victory.

Old Ocean to shrieks of despair is resounding,
  It washes the terror-struck nations with gore,
Wild Horror the fear-palsied earth is astounding,
  And murmurs of fate fright the dread-convulsed shore.
The Andes in sympathy start at the roar,
  Vast Ætna, alarmed, leans his flame-glowing brow,
  And huge Teneriffe stoops with his pinnacled snow.

The ice mountains echo, the Baltic, the Ocean,
  Where Cold sits enthroned on his column of snows,
Even Spitzbergen perceives the terrific commotion,
  The roar floats on the whirlwind of sleet, as this blows
Blood tinges the streams as half-frozen they flow,
  The meteors of war lurid flame thro' the air,
  They mix their bright gleam with the red polar star.

* * * * * *

All are brethren, and even the African bending
To the stroke of the hard-hearted Englishman's rod,
The courtier at Luxury's palace attending,
The senator trembling at Tyranny's nod,
Each nation which kneels at the footstool of God,
All are brethren—then banish distinction afar,
Let Concord and Love heal the miseries of War!

These are Elizabeth's. She has written many more, and I will show you at some future time the whole of the composition. I like it very much, if a brother may be allowed to praise a sister. I will write to-morrow.

Yours with affection,

P. B. S.

Can you read this?

To T. J. H.,
University College, Oxford.

FIELD PLACE, *Jan.* 12, 1811.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Your letter with the extremely beautiful enclosed poetry came this morning. It is really admirable; it touches the heart; but I must be allowed to offer *one* critique upon it. You will be surprised to hear that I think it unfinished. You have not said, that "the ivy, after it had destroyed the oak, as if to mock the miseries, which it caused, twined around a pine which stood near." It is true, therefore, but does not comprehend the whole truth.

As to the stuff which I sent you, I write all my poetry of that kind from the feelings of the moment; if therefore it neither has allusion to the sentiments which rationally might be supposed to possess me, or to those which my situation might awaken, it is another proof of that egotising variability, whilst I shudder to reflect how much I am in its power. To *you* I dare represent myself as I am: wretched to the last degree—sometimes one gleam of hope, one faint solitary gleam, seems to illumine the darkened prospect before me—but it has vanished. I fear it will never return. My sister will, I fear, never return the attachment which would once again bid me be calm. Yes! In this alone is my feeble anticipation of peace placed! But what am I? Am I not the most degraded of deceived enthusiasts? Do I not deceive myself? I never, never can feel peace again. What necessity is there for continuing in existence? But Heaven! Eternity! Love! My dear friend, I am yet a sceptic on these subjects; would that I could believe them to be, as they are represented; would that I could totally disbelieve them! But no! That would be selfish. I still have firmness enough to resist this last, this most horrible of errors. Is my despair the result of the hot, sickly love which inflames the admirers of Sterne or Moore? It is the conviction of unmerited unkindness, the conviction that, should a

future world exist, the object of my attachment would be as miserable as myself, is the cause of it.

I here take God (and a God exists) to witness, that I wish torments, which beggar the futile description of a fancied hell, would fall upon me; provided I could obtain thereby that happiness for *what* I love, which, I fear, can never be! The question is, what do I love? It is almost unnecessary to answer. Do I love the person, the embodied identity, if I may be allowed the expression? No! I love what is superior, what is excellent, or what I conceive to be so; and I wish, ardently wish, to be profoundly convinced of the existence of a Deity, that so superior a spirit might derive some degree of happiness from my feeble exertions: for love is heaven, and heaven is love. You think so, too, and you disbelieve not the existence of an eternal, omnipresent Spirit. Am I not mad? Alas! I am, but I pour out my ravings into the ear of a friend who will pardon them. Stay! I have an idea. I think I can prove the existence of a Deity—A First Cause. I will ask a materialist, how came this universe at first? He will answer, By chance. What chance? I will answer in the words of Spinoza: "An infinite number of atoms had been floating from all eternity in space, till at last one of them fortuitously diverged from its track, which, dragging with it another, formed the principle of gravitation, and in

consequence the universe." What cause produced this change, this chance? For where do we know that causes arise without their correspondent effects; at least we must here, on so abstract a subject, reason analogically. Was not this then a *cause*, was it not a *first* cause? Was not this first cause a Deity? Now nothing remains but to prove, that this Deity has a care, or rather that its only employment consists in regulating the present and future happiness of its creation. Our ideas of infinite space, &c., are scarcely to be called ideas, for we cannot either comprehend or explain them; therefore the Deity must be judged by us from attributes analogical to our situation. Oh, that this Deity were the soul of the universe, the spirit of universal, imperishable love! Indeed I believe it is: but now to your argument of the necessity of Christianity. I am not sure that your argument does not tend to prove its unreality. If it does not, you allow, you say, that love is the only true source of rational happiness: *one* man is capable of it, why not all?

The callibility of man preterite, I allow, but because men are, and have been callible, I see no reason why they should always continue so. Have there not been fluctuations in the opinions of mankind; and as the *stuff*, which soul is made of, must be in every one the same, would not an extended system of rational and moral unprejudiced

education, render each individual capable of experiencing that degree of happiness, to which each ought to aspire, more for others, than self. Hideous, hated traits of Superstition. Oh! Bigots, how I abhor your influence; they are all bad enough,—but do we not see Fanaticism decaying? is not its influence weakened, except where Faber, Rowland Hill, and several others of the Armageddon heroes maintain their posts with all the obstinacy of long-established dogmatism? How I pity them; how I despise, hate them! S. knows Mr. D. would publish your tale. I am beyond measure anxious for its appearance. Adieu! Excuse my mad arguments; they are none at all, for I am rather confused, and fear, in consequence of a fever, they will not allow me to come on the 26th, but I will. Adieu!

Your affectionate friend,

P. B. S.

You can inclose to Timothy Shelley, Esq., M.P.

To T. J. H.,
University College, Oxford.

Jan. 14, 1811.

My dear Friend,

Your letter and that of W—— came to-day; yours is excellent, and, I think, will fully (in his own mind) convince Mr. W——. I inclosed five sheets of paper full this morning, and sent them to the coach with yours. I sate up all night to

finish them; they attack his hypothesis in its very basis, which, at some future time, I will explain to you; and I have attempted to prove, from the *existence* of a Deity and of Revelation, the futility of the superstition upon which he founds his whole scheme.

I was sorry to see that you even remotely suspected me of being offended with you. How I wish that I could persuade you that it is impossible! I am really sleepy; could you suppose that I should be so apathetic as *ever* to sleep again till my last slumber? But it is so, and I shall take a walk in St. Leonard's Forest to dissipate it. Adieu! You shall hear from me to-morrow.

Your sincere friend,

P. B. S.

S—— has behaved infamously to me: he has abused the confidence I reposed in him in sending him my work; and he has made very free with your character, of which he knows nothing, with my father. I shall call on S—— in my way, that he may explain. May I expect to see your Tale printed?

To T. J. H.,
University College, Oxford.

CHAPTER V.

THE long vacation is an admirable and blessed institution, worthy of all honour and of perpetual observance; but the short vacations at Christmas and at Easter deserve utter execration, and exist only to be abolished. They are a pernicious interruption of the course of study, which is broken off almost as soon as it is fully begun, and an unseasonable disruption of studious friendships and agreeable society. If they were tolerable to young men, whose families reside at a moderate distance from the University, they were insupportable to those unfortunates who must travel by coaches, perhaps two whole days, and certainly two nights, to reach their household gods, and for the like space of time to return to College. All lectures, all instruction ceased, public libraries and every other place of amusement or resort were closed during these ferial days, even the entertainment of attending chapel was denied. The tutors departed, as well as all the under-graduates; the porter and the

master shut themselves up closely in their respective lodges; and the College servants could seldom be found. A dinner was provided certainly, but not in the Hall; the inhospitable table was spread in some mysterious apartment, which I never entered at any other time, and which seemed to have vanished as soon as term recommenced, so that I have sometimes wondered what became of it. At the dinner I commonly found myself alone. It consisted of a joint of meat, potatoes, and bread; all very good of their kind, no doubt; but it was impossible to obtain anything else—any of those little extras for which one might *battel* in term-time; the very cheese suffered dim eclipse, not a slice was to be procured. The College cook, in truth, would have felt that he was unworthy of his important office if he had approved himself less lazy than the master and tutors.

Many and great reforms were needed at our famous University in those days, which were far more pressing and urgent than the discouragement of metaphysical speculations in the active minds of a few studious youths.

It was manifest that my presence in the vacant seat of learning was unwelcome. To travel to the north of England, to rest myself for a few days there after my journey, and then to come back in the dark, as it were, in an ungenial season and the

shortest days, was too severe a sacrifice to be made even to the grossest abuse of educational trusts; so I determined to go to London.

London is a delightful place at all times; always full of instruction for those who are disposed to seek it; but, for a stranger to live, like a gentleman, at a hotel in London is expensive. After ten days or a fortnight, it was prudent to return to Oxford.

At the beginning of January, 1811, the weather was intensely cold; there was a severe frost, and the ground was thickly covered with snow. I studied alone, until I could study no more; I read until I was weary and cold. Oh! so cold! A youth of eighteen cannot warm himself by sitting over the fire; to thaw my blood by parading the solitary streets of the deserted city, or the lonely frozen public walks, was uninviting, and, indeed, impracticable. I was at all times well inclined for a pedestrian tour, and I now resolved to undertake one; accordingly I took counsel with myself, and planned it. Stonehenge, of which I had read so much and such strange things, and the two glorious cathedrals of Salisbury and Winchester, of which I had seen several views in sundry rooms at Oxford and elsewhere, were more tempting than any other objects within the reach of a walk, and I made up my mind to visit the three wonderful temples. One morning, therefore, at the beginning of January, I

equipped myself, as for the chase, with strong shooting-shoes and gaiters, taking no more luggage than the pockets of a shooting-jacket would contain, and, after an early breakfast, I sallied forth. My travelling library consisted of "P. Virgilii Maronis Bucolica, Georgica, et Æneis, ad optimorum exemplarium fidem recensita. 12mo. Edinburgi et Glasguæ, 1796."

"Adscensu supero, et adrectis auribus adsto."

This verse abundantly testifies that the recension on the faith of the best copies was a reprint of Heyne's text. I crossed the frozen Isis, and entered Berkshire, and I took my lonely way through Bagley Wood to Abingdon; with this portion of my journey, I was already familiar. I then entered upon new ground, and proceeded, if I mistake not, through Islip, by fields covered with snow,—ploughed lands, for the most part, and uninclosed; a district altogether without interest; a vast solitude, for I scarcely met a human being all day.

When the short day closed in, which, however, was somewhat lengthened, and lighted by the reflection of the bright snow, I began to look out for a resting-place, and I came at last to an ancient, solitary, decaying inn, which I entered. There seemed to be no male creature there; at least,

I saw none during my stay. I found only two stale women; a stale middle-aged woman, who acted as waiter and chambermaid, and an older and still staler woman, the landlady; they were equally sullen, slow, and stupid.

The wanderer, Ulysses, was welcomed so far by Calypso and her attendant nymph, that he was not actually turned out of doors by them: dinner and a bed were not absolutely denied him. After a long sojourn in a cold, gloomy room, by the side of a half-lighted fire, dinner was served. Those were wonderful days for inns, especially in the matter of steaks and chops. It is wonderful how they could procure beef and mutton, so tough, and at the same time, not over fresh; how they could make the article so black and greasy, and utterly uneatable, be the appetite what it might! Such viands the stale handmaid put upon the table, with raw potatoes, muddy beer, stinking cheese, and wine that might be paid for, but not drunken. The hope of tea was the sole remaining consolation; it was a great one, and seemed all-sufficient. Wiltshire and Berkshire, according to my subsequent experience, are two starving counties, and the common people are mere clods. As much virtue as there is in chopped straw, so much was there in this tea, and no more. No milk could be had, as I have often found to be the case in Berkshire; but there

was a huge, indurated loaf, and salt butter such as it was.

Nothing remained but to go to bed. The stale chambermaid conducted me upstairs to a large, old, cold room; the fire below did not induce me to require one above, but I ventured to ask to have my bed warmed. The stale woman hesitated, but finally consented. She withdrew, and, after a long reluctant delay, returned, and began her genial office. If she was long in beginning, she was still longer in ending; it seemed as if she had taken root in the floor, and would have remained for ever fixed at the foot of the bed. But her tardiness in this instance was beneficial; and, when I was allowed at last to get into bed, I soon felt a warmth which I had not supposed so grim a wench could have imparted. Breakfast was a repetition of tea: eggs there were none; bacon was ignored; there were steaks and chops: these had been tried before. The name of the place, where the staring, solitary, old inn stood, the stale women would not or could not tell me. I paid my score, and departed, having fulfilled my destinies. It seemed indeed as though the whole course of hospitality had been guided by destiny, and that the hotel was kept by two of the Fates, by the two survivors, the third having died of cold and hunger. A walk of an hour or two brought me to Hungerford, a hungry-looking place,

where nothing tempted me to tarry. I continued my journey over a vast plain, not a dead level, not absolutely flat, but gently undulating, and covered with snow, white, bright, and shining. It was less unsatisfactory than the landscape of the day before, for it did not affect to be anything else than what it was—a vacuum, mere space, empty space. I continued my solitary ramble; I quitted Berkshire at what point I know not, and I got into Wiltshire. After a time I reached Amesbury, which seemed, notwithstanding a thick covering of snow, a pleasant spot; a fruitful oasis in the midst of a desert. It was the first place I met with since I left Oxford, where I would willingly have remained; to be made Duke of Queensbury, or at least to have inhabited his beautiful mansion, would have been an offer not lightly to have been rejected. I was here told how to find my way to the first object of my tour, to the first of the three famous temples, to the Pagan, the Celtic temple: it was only two or three miles distant.

I readily found the celebrated Stonehenge; like everything else, it was deeply imbedded in snow. The snow lay thick upon the few transverse stones which still remained in their original position, and upon all the large stones that had been thrown down, and were scattered on the hard frozen ground. It is a wonderful monument of a most remote and

unknown antiquity; but I could not think that there was much to be seen there. Many sheep had found shelter amongst these ruins, and they were attended by two or three shepherds. I remembered, that when I was a child, I had read with pleasure some tale of the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain; here he was then, I had found him at last! The shepherds were very civil to me; they seemed deeply impressed with the importance of the locality, and explained various matters to me. A professed antiquary could not have told the wondrous tale better, perhaps not so well. They expressed much regret that my first visit to the scene, which they esteemed so highly, had been made in deep snow, for I saw it then to great disadvantage; I should have seen it far better if the ground had been clear. One of them made a remark which I never heard before or since; nor have I ever found it in any book, viz., that the huge stones are not real native stones, but a composition. And he took much pains to show me that they had no grain, no veins, no layers; and he gave me at parting a piece which he had himself broken off, and he pointed out the stone from which he had taken it, fitting it into its place exactly. This fragment had rather the appearance certainly of Roman cement than of stone; perhaps it was more like a volcanic substance called tufa, with which I long afterwards became familiar at Rome and at

Naples. The good shepherds pointed out the road to Salisbury, and told me, when I should see the tall spire before me; the distance, if I remember right, they said was six miles.

I followed the shepherds' direction and my solitary journey. It was dusk when I arrived at the city of Salisbury. The West of England in those days was renowned for the badness of its inns, and Salisbury did not lessen this evil repute: I found there every possible discomfort. Next morning, as early as the short days would permit, I repaired to the second object of my pilgrimage, the beautiful cathedral. The Close, like the rest of the diocese, was at that time overspread with snow. I have seen it more than once afterwards a green lawn with venerable trees in full leaf. Our marvellous old churches are commonly blocked up on every side with mean, squalid, ugly buildings. It was agreeable to find a large open space, to see that the exquisite edifice was clear on all sides, and to examine the exterior from different points of view. As such structures are always, but never ought to be, it was fast locked up. But when I was trying in vain to open the fastened doors, a middle-aged man appeared, and unlocked the wicket. I entered and walked slowly round; the interior, as such edifices too commonly are, was in a state of dirty neglect; but the glories of the purest lancet style of

Gothic architecture might be dimmed and obscured but not quenched by the stupid indifference of a Dean and his Chapter, a chapter of accidents—of most untoward accidents.

My guide was not by any means such a sullen brute as a verger usually is; on the contrary, he was obliging and patient. He appeared to sympathise with my intense admiration of the lovely building, of which he had the charge, and instead of hurrying me over the church, and abruptly turning me out before I had half seen it, he permitted me to return to some objects which I desired to look at a second time; and his manner almost invited me to stay. He was, I think, the only functionary of the kind to whom I ever gave half-a-crown without grudging it. A curious traveller has undoubtedly as much right to contemplate at his leisure the inside of a public building gratuitously, as he has to look up at the face of the cathedral clock; and to be shut out is scarcely less offensive than it would be for some officer of the ecclesiastical corporation to march up to a stranger, and placing his hand over his eyes, to say, "Unless you will give me one shilling at least, and as much more as you please, you shall not know what time it is—such are the orders of Mr. Dean."

The refined delight which I experienced in admiring the wonders of art was seriously interrupted

by a very gross and vulgar consideration; my shooting-shoes were already beginning to fail me, the sharp ice and the hard frozen roads had told severely upon them. It would have been easy enough to have bought a new pair of strong shoes at Salisbury, but it would be by no means easy to walk back to Oxford in them by way of Winchester. My only course was to try to get them repaired. Accordingly, having quitted my dirty, dreary inn, I looked out for a shoemaker; I soon found one, and I entered the shop of a humble cobbler. I told him what I wanted. He looked at my shoes, and soon re-assured me by promising, in an hour or less, to put them in good order.

"A few *parables* will do it."

I thought the man said *parables*. I had heard much of instruction being conveyed by parables, but I wondered not a little how shoes could be repaired by parables, parallelisms, or proverbs. The venerable man took off my shoes, put them on his lasts, and proceeded to knock a number of small nails into the soles—nails of a peculiar form. I took up one of the nails.

"Are these what you call parables? It is a remarkable name, why do you call them so?"

"Because they are like the beak of a bird—of a sparrow; that is why they are always called sparrow-bills."

The job was soon done, and the shoes put on again. He hoped that I would not consider sixpence unreasonable; he had put nearly sixpennyworth of sparrow-bills into them, to say nothing of the work. I did not think the demand unreasonable; and the old man and his old wife pointed out the road to Winchester. It lay through a pleasant valley, all white with snow, the roads being frozen as hard as ever. It was not a long walk, I know not how long, but, having spent much time at Salisbury, I reached Winchester in the dark. I had quitted Wiltshire, at what point I could not tell, and entered Hampshire for the first time; where I passed the boundary of the two counties I knew not. I put up at a spacious, cold, dull inn, which did not derogate from the well-founded pretensions of the West of England. I was treated with condescending kindness by a pompous old waiter, who used towards me a certain slow, cumbrous, ponderous, officious civility; but the place was thoroughly uncomfortable. After an especially nasty dinner, I wrote a long letter to Field Place, describing my pedestrian tour. I was desirous, next day, to make my escape as soon as possible; but this was not to be effected readily; however, after long delays, having at last obtained breakfast and my bill from the dignified lord high chamberlain of the dreary establishment, I betook myself to

the third and last object of my liberal curiosity—the very ancient and most majestic cathedral.

I stood for some time viewing with admiration the prodigious length of the church, and the sober grandeur of the exterior, when the bells began to ring for the morning service. The doors were opened, and I entered. I wandered about in every direction, and found no interruption, except so far as black looks were an interruption, for some persons eyed me with jealousy, as if they thought that I was stealing a march upon them. I will not describe what has been already often described, so far, indeed, as it is capable of description. The morning service had begun, I went into the choir and heard a part of it. But, recollecting that I had seen all the three objects of my winter-walk, the two Christian and one Druidical temples, nothing now remained but to walk back to Oxford, and that I ought not to lose time, but make the best of my way thither, I quitted the last of the three venerable temples, and not the least venerable of them, with regret; and I am sorry to add that I have never seen it since, save from the window of a carriage, lately, on the Southampton Railway. I left the noble old pile, and turned my face to the north. The day was intensely cold, raw, and foggy; I inquired for the road to Newbury, and I pursued it, walking fast to warm myself. After a while the

frost began to give, and walking became slippery and unpleasant.

I found nothing remarkable in my way; the country was less bare, desolate, and hedgeless, than on the road from Oxford to Salisbury. In the afternoon a young farmer joined me, walking by my side; he was a modest, ingenuous youth, with whom there could be no need of concealment; so I told him my story, a simple story enough. He cheered me by the information that I should find good accommodation at Newbury, and communicated the sign of the inn where it was to be had. He halted at the door of a farm-house. "I live here," he said; "we are going to tea, step in and take it with us; you must want something!"

We entered a kitchen where there was a blazing fire, the father and mother, old people, and two or three female servants; in a snug corner by the fire there sat, in a suit of rusty black, an itinerant Methodist preacher. The good people gave me tea in the olden fashion, in exceedingly small cups, very sweet, very weak, and intensely hot, as weak tea invariably is; and thick bread and butter. The humble entertainment was infinitely refreshing.

On hearing that I belonged to the University of Oxford, for which they appeared to feel the most profound reverence, the old people asked me a number of questions, and very sensible and

pertinent ones, respecting it. The good folks at the farm-house could enter into the feelings that led me forth to wander to the three vast and famous temples, and to undergo great fatigue, and take much trouble for such an object. They could comprehend also, which, for the most part, persons of higher station and superior education could not,—how with augmented curiosity and interest, with long accumulated feelings of reverence, these famous structures are slowly, and perhaps painfully, approached on foot; and how different a thing it is to drive to them easily and rapidly in a post-chaise or mail-coach.

When I rose to depart, and acknowledged their hospitality, they thanked me for my condescension; and the preacher, who had not spoken before, but had employed himself in putting away a large store of bread and butter, said, "It is good to exercise hospitality, for some unawares have entertained angels!" The good-natured young farmer walked by the side of the angel of the Church of Oxford some two miles, through the slush, for the thaw was extremely rapid. At parting he said, if I rightly remember, "It is now three miles to Newbury."

My progress was slow and painful, and it was quite dark when I entered Newbury. I was guided to the inn which the farmer's son had recommended,

and I found there warmth, cleanliness, civility, good cheer, and every comfort, rendered still more agreeable by the force of contrast, all which I greatly needed; for I had walked, and walked hard, in very severe weather for four long days, and I was literally perishing with cold, hunger, and fatigue.

The walk to Abingdon, next day, was horrible; the thaw continued, and the roads were broken up; the poor sparrow-bills were as tired of it as myself, and began to give way, so that iced water and melting snow found a passage into my shoes. At Abingdon, a nasty little girl gave me some nasty tea in a nasty cold room. After my scurvy meal, I ploughed on through liquid mud and liquefying snow with intolerable labour. It was dark long before I reached Oxford, and when I got to University College, the kitchen and buttery were closed, and the college-servants had gone home for the night, taking the keys of my rooms with them. However, the solemn old porter, with some trouble, contrived to open the spring lock of the outer door, with the thin blade of an old table-knife, and I was thus enabled to do one thing, which was, in fact, under the present circumstances, everything, to get rid of the wet gaiters, stockings, and shoes, with all their sparrow-bills, and to creep into bed. Such was my pilgrimage to the three great Western Temples.

I had satisfied my curiosity, and, moreover, I had taken away,—for the first few days, it seemed, for ever,—my desire of walking. To sit before the fire and read, appeared to be the summit of human felicity! The first-fruits of my sitting still, and of this strong disinclination ever to go out of the college-gates again, were to read the Going-up of Cyrus. The "Anabasis" of Xenophon was a book deservedly in high repute at Oxford. I perused it very carefully, with the lexicon and atlas by my side, for the first time, with unspeakable gratification, and endless, abiding profit.

[*No date.*]

My dear Friend,

You are all over the country. I shall be at Oxford on Friday or Saturday evening. I will write to you from London. My father's prophetic prepossession in your favour is become as high as before it was to your prejudice. Whence it arises, or from what cause, I am inadequate to say; I can merely state the fact. He came from London full of your praises; your family, that of Mr. Hogg, of Norton House, near Stockton-upon-Tees. Your principles are *now* as divine as before they were diabolical. I tell you this with extreme satisfaction, and, to sum up the whole, he has desired me to make his compliments to you, and to invite you to

make Field Place your head-quarters for the Easter vacation. I hope you will accept of it. I fancy he has been talking in town to some of the northern Members of Parliament who are acquainted with your family. However that may be, I hope you have no other arrangement for Easter which can interfere with granting me the pleasure of introducing you personally here.

You have very well drawn your line of distinction between instinctive and rational motives of action; the *former* are not in our own power, yet we may doubt if even these are *purely* selfish, as congeniality, sympathy, unaccountable attractions of intellect, which arise independent frequently of any considerations of your own interest, operating violently in contradiction to it, and bringing on wretchedness, which your reason plainly foresees, which yet, although your judgment disapproves of, you take no pains to obviate. All this is not selfish. And surely the operations of reason, of judgment, in a man whose judgment is fully convinced of the baseness of any motive, can never be consonant with it.

Adieu! Your affectionate.

To T. J. H., Oxford.

FIELD PLACE, *Jan.* 16, 1811.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You will hear from me to-morrow. I have, to-day, scarcely time but to tell you that I do not

forget you. You tell me that it will show greatness of soul to rise after such a fall as mine. Ah! what pain must I feel when I contradict the flattering view which you have taken of my character. Do I not know myself? Do I not feel the acutest poignancy of mortification amounting to actual misery? Alas! I must, with Godwin, say that in man, imperfect as he now exists, there is never a motive for action unmixed; that the best has its alloy, the worst is commingled with virtue. What does my mortification arise from? Surely not wholly for myself, not wholly for the happiness of the being whom I have lost. Did I know, were I convinced, that I felt for nothing but Her, no self-reproach would tell me that my pangs were disgraceful. But now, when I fear, when I feel, that, in spite of myself, regret for the high happiness which I have lost is mingled with the other consideration, do I feel, too, that it is disgraceful, degrading! Adieu! I will write to-morrow.

To T. J. H., Oxford.

FIELD PLACE, *January* 17, 1811.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I shall be with you as soon as possible next week. You really were at Hungerford, whether you knew it or not. You tell me nothing about the tale which you promised me. I hope it gets on in the

press, I am anxious for its appearance. S—— certainly behaved in a vile manner to me; no other bookseller would have violated the confidence reposed in him. I will talk to him in London, where I shall be on Tuesday. Can I do anything for you there?

You notice the peculiarity of the expression "My Sister" in my letters. It certainly arose independent of consideration, and I am happy to hear that it is so.

Your systematic cudgel for blockheads is excellent. I tried it on with my father, who told me that thirty years ago he had read Locke, but this made no impression. The "*equus et res*" are all that I can boast of; the "*pater*" is swallowed up in the first article of the catalogue. You tell me nothing of the tale; I am all anxiety about it. I am forced hastily to bid you adieu.

To T. J. H.,
University College, Oxford.

We are told in the editor's preface to the "Poetical Works of Shelley," that it was not until he resided in Italy that he made Plato his study. If it be meant, as no doubt it is, that he did not study Plato in the original, the assertion is correct. It would be absurd to affirm that a profound, accurate, critical knowledge of the author may be acquired

through the medium of translations, and at second-hand by abstracts and abridgments. But enough of the philosopher's doctrine and principles may be, and were, in fact, imbibed at Oxford, and at an early age, without consulting the Greek text to convince him of the incorrectness and inconclusiveness, of the dangers indeed, of the reasonings and conclusions of the school of Locke and his disciples. Many of the tenets of Plato, of Socrates their common master, are exhibited by Xenophon, whose writings we had already read in the original. The English version of the French translation by Dacier of the "Phædo," and several other dialogues of Plato, was the first book we had, and this we read together several times very attentively at Oxford. We had a French translation of the "Republic;" and we perused with infinite pleasure the elegant translation of Floyer Sydenham. We had several of the publications of the learned and eccentric Platonist, Thomas Taylor. In truth, it would be tedious to specify and describe all the reflected lights borrowed from the great luminary, the sun of the Academy, that illumined the path of two young students. That Shelley had not read any portion of Plato in the original before he went to Italy, is not strictly true. He had a very legible edition of the Works of Plato in several volumes; a charming edition, the Bipont, I think, and I have read passages out of it with him.

I remember going up to London with him from Marlow one morning; he took a volume of Plato with him, and we read a good deal of it together, sitting side by side on the top of the coach. Phædrus, I am pretty sure, was the dialogue—on beauty. Before Shelley came to Oxford he composed a tale, or a fragment of a tale, on the subject of the Wandering Jew, giving to him, however, the name of a Persian, not of a Jew—Ahasuerus, Artaxerxes. This no learned, accurate German would have done. That he found the composition in the streets of London is an integral portion of the fiction. "This fragment is the translation of part of some German work, the title of which I have vainly endeavoured to discover. I picked it up, dirty and torn, some years ago, in Lincoln's Inn Fields."

It is a common device to add to the interest of a romance by asserting that the MS. was discovered in a cavern, in a casket; that it had lain long hidden in an old chest, or a tomb. From the preface of Dictys the Cretan, whose history of the Trojan war was discovered, we are told, in Crete, the author's tomb having been opened by an earthquake, down to the most modern fictions, this embellishment has been in constant use. Respecting the finding of this fragment, some have affirmed one thing, and some another. It has been said

that it was part of a printed book in the German language. If it had been in German, Shelley could not have translated it at that time, for he did not know a word of German. The study of that tongue —being both equally ignorant of it—we commenced together in 1815. Of this our joint study hereafter. Somebody or other, determined not to be left behind in the race, declares that he found it himself, if I mistake not, and presented it to Shelley. Was not this worthy gentleman also present at Gnossus when the tablets of Dictys were brought to light by the earthquake? A portion of the fragment has been printed in the notes to "Queen Mab." I have amongst Shelley's papers a fragment of the fragment, in his handwriting. It is one leaf only, and it appears to be the last, the conclusion of the story. The last sentence has never been printed; it presents the narrative of the sufferings of Ahasuerus in a totally different point of view with reference to moral and religious considerations, and is therefore not undeserving attention.

FRAGMENT OF THE WANDERING JEW.

—— did the elephant trample on me, in vain the iron hoof of the wrathful steed. The mine, big with destructive power, burst upon me and hurled me high in the air. I fell down upon a heap of

smoking limbs, but was only singed. The giant's steel club rebounded from my body. The executioner's hand could not strangle me; nor would the hungry lion in the circus devour me; I cohabited with poisonous snakes; I pinched the red crest of the dragon; the serpent stung, but could not kill me; the dragon tormented, but could not devour me. I now provoked the fury of tyrants. I said to Nero, "Thou art a bloodhound;" said to Christern, "Thou art a bloodhound;" said to Muley Ismail, "Thou art a bloodhound." The tyrants invented cruel torments, but could not kill me. Ha! Not to be able to die; *not to be permitted to rest after the toils of life;* to be doomed for ever to be imprisoned in this *clay-formed* dungeon; to be for ever clogged with this worthless body, its load of diseases and infirmities; to be condemned to hold for millenniums that yawning monster, Time, that hungry hyena, ever bearing children, ever devouring again her offspring.

Ha! Not to be permitted to die! Awful Avenger in Heaven, hast Thou in Thine armoury of wrath a punishment more dreadful? Then let it thunder upon me. Command a hurricane to sweep me down to the foot of Carmel, that I there may lie extended, may pant, and writhe, and die!

And Ahasuerus dropped down. Night covered his bristly eyelid. The Angel bore me back to the

cavern. "Sleep here," said the Angel, "sleep in peace; the wrath of thy Judge is appeased; when thou shalt awake, He will be arrived, He whose blood thou sawest flow upon Golgotha. Whose mercy is extended even to thee!

London, *May* 30, 1834.

My dear Sir,

I did not inquire, but, as you did not show it to me, I presume you do not possess in your inestimable collection the autograph of poor Shelley. I now send you a poem, or rather a rough draft of part of a poem, by his hand, and from his head and heart. The papers amongst which it was found, and other circumstances, lead me to believe that it was written in 1810, when the young poet was but seventeen or eighteen years old. It is doubtless unpublished, and of a more early date than any of his published poems; on all accounts, therefore, it is most interesting. I selected it for you soon after my return, but I mislaid it, and when I wrote to you the other day I could not find it. With kind regards to Mrs. Turner,

I am, &c.,

T. J. Hogg.

Dawson Turner, Esq.,
Yarmouth.

DEATH.

For my dagger is bathed in the blood of the brave,
I come, care-worn tenant of life, from the grave,
Where Innocence sleeps 'neath the peace-giving sod,
And the good cease to tremble at Tyranny's nod;
I offer a calm habitation to thee,
Say, victim of grief, wilt thou slumber with me?
My mansion is damp, cold silence is there,
But it lulls in oblivion the fiends of despair,
Not a groan of regret, not a sigh, not a breath,
Dares dispute with grim silence the empire of Death.
I offer a calm habitation to thee,
Say, victim of grief, wilt thou slumber with me?

MORTAL.

Mine eyelids are heavy; my soul seeks repose,
It longs in thy cells to embosom its woes,
It longs in thy cells to deposit its load,
Where no longer the scorpions of Perfidy goad;
Where the phantoms of Prejudice vanish away,
And Bigotry's bloodhounds lose scent of their prey;
Yet tell me, dark Death, when thine empire is o'er,
What awaits on Futurity's mist-covered shore?

DEATH.

Cease, cease, wayward Mortal! I dare not unveil
The shadows that float on Eternity's vale;
Nought waits for the good, but a spirit of Love,
That will hail their blest advent to regions above.
For Love, Mortal, gleams thro' the gloom of my sway,
And the shades which surround me fly fast at its ray.
Hast thou loved?—Then depart from these regions of hate,
And in slumber with me blunt the arrows of fate.
I offer a calm habitation to thee,
Say, victim of grief, wilt thou slumber with me?

MORTAL.

Oh! sweet is thy slumber! oh! sweet is the ray
Which after thy night introduces the day;

How concealed, how persuasive, self-interest's breath,
Tho' it floats to mine ear from the bosom of Death.
I hoped that I quite was forgotten by all,
Yet a lingering friend might be grieved at my fall,
And duty forbids, tho' I languish to die,
When departure might heave virtue's breast with a sigh.
Oh, Death! oh, my friend! snatch this form to thy shrine,
And I fear, dear destroyer, I shall not repine.

The following unfinished verses were written at Oxford; they have never been published.

Death! where is thy victory?
To triumph whilst I die,
To triumph whilst thine ebon wing
Infolds my shuddering soul.
Oh, Death! where is thy sting?
Not when the tides of murder roll,
When nations groan, that kings may bask in bliss.
Death! canst thou boast a victory such as this?
When in his hour of pomp and power
His blow the mightiest murders gave,
'Mid nature's cries the sacrifice
Of millions to glut the grave;
When sunk the tyrant desolation's slave;
Or Freedom's life-blood streamed upon thy shrine;
Stern tyrant, couldst thou boast a victory such as mine?

To know in dissolution's void,
That mortals baubles sunk decay,
That everything, but Love, destroyed
Must perish with its kindred clay.
Perish Ambition's crown,
Perish her sceptered sway;
From Death's pale front fades Pride's fastidious frown.
In Death's damp vault the lurid fires decay,
That Envy lights at heaven-born Virtue's beam—

That all the cares subside,
Which lurk beneath the tide

Of life's unquiet stream.
Yes! this is victory!
And on yon rock, whose dark form glooms the sky,
To stretch these pale limbs, when the soul is fled;
To baffle the lean passions of their prey,
To sleep within the palace of the dead!
Oh! not the King, around whose dazzling throne
His countless courtiers mock the words they say,
Triumphs amid the bud of glory blown,
As I in this cold bed, and faint expiring groan!

Tremble, ye proud, whose grandeur mocks the woe,
Which props the column of unnatural state,
You the plainings faint and low,
From misery's tortured soul that flow,
Shall usher to your fate.

Tremble, ye conquerors, at whose fell command
The war-fiend riots o'er a peaceful land.
You desolation's gory throng
Shall bear from Victory along
To that mysterious strand.

Cold, cold is the blast, when December is howling,
Cold are the damps on a dying man's brow.
Stern are the seas, when the wild waves are rolling,
And sad the grave where a loved one lies low.
But colder is scorn from the being who loved thee,
More stern is the sneer from the friend who has proved thee,
More sad are the tears when these sorrows have moved thee,
Which mixed with groans, anguish, and wild madness flow.

And, ah! poor Louisa has felt all this horror;
Full long the fallen victim contended with fate,
Till a destitute outcast, abandoned to sorrow,
She sought her babe's food at her ruiner's gate.
Another had charmed the remorseless betrayer,
He turned callous aside from her moan and her prayer,—
She said nothing, but wringing the wet from her hair,
Crossed the dark mountain's side, tho' the hour it was late.

'Twas on the dark summit of huge Penmanmauer
That the form of the wasted Louisa reclined;
She shrieked to the ravens that croaked from afar,
And she sighed to the gusts of the wild-sweeping wind.
"I call not yon clouds, where the thunder-peals rattle,
I call not yon rocks, where the elements battle,
But thee, perjured Henry, I call thee unkind!"

Then she wreathed in her hair the wild flowers of the mountain,
And, deliriously laughing, a garland entwined,
She bedewed it with tears, then she hung o'er the fountain,
And, laving it, cast it a prey to the wind.
"Ah, go!" she exclaimed, "where the tempest is yelling;
'Tis unkind to be cast on the sea that is swelling;
But I left, a pitiless outcast, my dwelling;
My garments are torn—so, they say, is my mind."

Not long lived Louisa—but over her grave
Waved the desolate form of a storm-blasted yew,
Around it no demons or ghosts dare to rave,
But spirits of Peace steep her slumbers in dew.
Then stay thy swift steps 'mid the dark mountain heather
Tho' chill blow the wind and severe be the weather,
For Perfidy, traveller, cannot bereave her
Of the tears to the tombs of the innocent due!

Oh! sweet is the moonbeam that sleeps on yon fountain,
And sweet the mild rush of the soft-sighing breeze,
And sweet is the glimpse of yon dimly-seen mountain
'Neath the verdant arcades of yon shadowy trees;
But sweeter than all ——

And, ah! she may envy the heart-shocked quarry,
Who bids to the scenery of childhood farewell,
She may envy the bosom all bleeding and gory,
She may envy the sound of the drear-passing knell.
Not so deep are his woes on his death-couch reposing
When on the last vision his dim eyes are closing,
As the outcast ——

Those notes were so sad and so soft, that, ah! never
May the sound cease to vibrate on memory's ear!

Bysshe wrote down these verses for me at Oxford from memory. I was to have a complete and more correct copy of them some day. They were the composition of his sister Elizabeth, and he valued them highly as well as their author, with whom, except an occasional tiff, when she preferred less dry and abstruse matters to his ethical and metaphysical speculations, he agreed most affectionately, cordially, and perfectly. I was to undertake to fall in love with her; if I did not I had no business to go to Field Place, and he would never forgive me. I promised to do my best; and, probably, it would not have been difficult to have kept my promise, at least, in a poetical sense. For any one whose age, fortune, and inclinations disposed him to settle in life, it might have been very easy to fall in love in a more earnest and practical manner, for she was one of those young ladies who win golden opinions from all their acquaintance.

I often found Shelley reading "Gebir." There was something in that poem which caught his fancy. He would read it aloud, or to himself sometimes, with a tiresome pertinacity. One morning, I went to his rooms to tell him something of importance, but he would attend to nothing but "Gebir." With a young impatience, I snatched the book out of the obstinate fellow's hand, and threw it through the open window into the quadrangle. It fell upon

the grass-plat, and was brought back presently by the servant. I related this incident, some years afterwards, and after the death of my poor friend, at Florence to the highly gifted author. He heard it with his hearty, cordial, genial laugh. "Well, you must allow it is something to have produced what could please one fellow creature and offend another so much."

I regret that those two intellectual persons were not acquainted with each other. If I would confer a real benefit upon a friend, I would procure for him, if it were possible, the friendship of Walter Savage Landor!

CHAPTER VI

"ABOVE all things, Liberty!" The political creed of Shelley may be comprised in a few words; it was, in truth, that of most men, and, in a peculiar manner, of young men, during the freshness and early spring of revolutions. He held that not only is the greatest possible amount of civil liberty to be preferred to all other blessings, but that this advantage is all-sufficient, and comprehends within itself every other desirable object. The former position is as unquestionably true as the latter is undoubtedly false. It is no small praise, however, to a very young man, to say, that, on a subject so remote from the comprehension of youth, his opinions were at least half right. Twenty years ago, the young men at our Universities were satisfied with upholding the political doctrines of which they approved by private discussions: they did not venture to form clubs of brothers, and to move resolutions, except a small number of enthusiasts, of doubtful sanity, who alone sought to usurp, by

crude and premature efforts, the offices of a matured understanding and of manly experience.

Although our fellow-collegians were willing to learn before they took upon themselves the heavy and thankless charge of instructing others, there was no lack of beardless politicians amongst us: of these, some were more strenuous supporters of the popular cause in our little circles than others; but all were abundantly liberal. A Brutus, or a Gracchus, would have found many to surpass him, and few, indeed, to fall short, in theoretical devotion to the interests of equal freedom. I can scarcely recollect a single exception amongst my numerous acquaintances: all, I think, were worthy of the best ages of Greece, or of Rome; all were true, loyal citizens, brave and free. How, indeed, could it be otherwise? Liberty is the morning-star of youth; and those who enjoy the inappreciable blessing of a classical education, are taught betimes to lisp its praises. They are nurtured in the writings of its votaries; and they even learn their native tongue, as it were, at secondhand, and reflected in the glorious pages of the authors, who, in the ancient languages, and in strains of a noble eloquence, that will never fail to astonish succeeding generations, proclaim unceasingly, with every variety of powerful and energetic phrase, "Above all things, Liberty!" The praises of liberty were the favourite topic of

our earliest verses, whether they flowed with natural ease, or were elaborated painfully out of the resources of art; and the tyrant was set up as an object of scorn, to be pelted with the first ink of our themes. How, then, can an educated youth be other than free?

Shelley was entirely devoted to the lovely theory of freedom; but he was also eminently averse at that time from engaging in the far less beautiful practices wherein are found the actual and operative energies of liberty. I was maintaining against him one day at my rooms the superiority of the ethical sciences over the physical. In the course of the debate he cried, with shrill vehemence—for as his aspect presented to the eye much of the elegance of the peacock, so, in like manner, he cruelly lacerated the ear with its discordant tones—"You talk of the pre-eminence of moral philosophy; do you comprehend politics under that name? and will you tell me, as others do, and as Plato, I believe, teaches, that of this philosophy the political department is the highest and the most important?" Without expecting an answer, he continued—"A certain nobleman (and he named him) advised me to turn my thoughts towards politics immediately. 'You cannot direct your attention that way too early in this country,' said the Duke; 'they are the proper career for a young man of ability and of your station

in life. That course is the most advantageous, because it is a monopoly. A little success in that line goes far, since the number of competitors is limited; and of those who are admitted to the contest, the greater part are altogether devoid of talent, or too indolent to exert themselves: so many are excluded, that, of the few who are permitted to enter, it is difficult to find any that are not utterly unfit for the ordinary service of the state. It is not so in the church; it is not so at the bar: there all may offer themselves. The number of rivals in those professions is far greater, and they are, besides, of a more formidable kind. In letters, your chance of success is still worse. There none can win gold, and all may try to gain reputation: it is a struggle for glory—the competition is infinite—there are no bounds—that is a spacious field, indeed—a sea without shores!' The Duke talked thus to me many times, and strongly urged me to give myself up to politics without delay; but he did not persuade me. With how unconquerable an aversion do I shrink from political articles in newspapers and reviews! I have heard people talk politics by the hour, and how I hated it and them! I went with my father several times to the House of Commons, and what creatures did I see there! What faces!—what an expression of countenance!—what wretched beings!" Here he clasped his hands, and

raised his voice to a painful pitch, with fervid dislike. "Good God! what men did we meet about the House—in the lobbies and passages! and my father was so civil to all of them—to animals that I regarded with unmitigated disgust! A friend of mine, an Eton man, told me that his father once invited some corporation to dine at his house, and that he was present. When dinner was over, and the gentlemen nearly drunk, they started up, he said, and swore they would all kiss his sisters. His father laughed, and did not forbid them; and the wretches would have done it; but his sisters heard of the infamous proposal, and ran up-stairs, and locked themselves in their bed-rooms. I asked him if he would not have knocked them down if they had attempted such an outrage in his presence. It seems to me that a man of spirit ought to have killed them if they had effected their purpose." The sceptical philosopher sat for several minutes in silence, his cheeks glowing with intense indignation.

"Never did a more finished gentleman than Shelley step across a drawing-room!" Lord Byron exclaimed; and on reading the remark in Mr. Moore's "Memoirs," I was struck forcibly by its justice, and wondered for a moment that, since it was so obvious, it had never been made before. Perhaps this excellence was blended so intimately

with his entire nature, that it seemed to constitute a part of his identity, and being essential and necessary was therefore never noticed. I observed his eminence in this respect before I had sat beside him many minutes at our first meeting in the hall of University College. Since that day, I have had the happiness to associate with some of the best specimens of gentlemen; but with all due deference for those admirable persons (may my candour and my preference be pardoned), I can affirm that Shelley was almost the only example I have yet found that was never wanting, even in the most minute particular, of the infinite and various observances of pure, entire, and perfect gentility. Trifling, indeed, and unimportant, were the aberrations of some whom I could name; but in him, during a long and most unusual familiarity, I discovered no flaw, no tarnish; the metal was sterling, and the polish absolute. I have also seen him, although rarely, "stepping across a drawing-room," and then his deportment, as Lord Byron testifies, was unexceptionable. Such attendances, however, were pain and grief to him, and his inward discomfort was not hard to be discerned.

An acute observer, whose experience of life was infinite, and who had been long and largely conversant with the best society in each of the principal capitals of Europe, had met Shelley, of whom he

was a sincere admirer, several times in public. He remarked one evening, at a large party where Shelley was present, his extreme discomfort, and added, "It is but too plain that there is something radically wrong in the constitution of our assemblies, since such a man finds not pleasure, nor even ease, in them." His speculations concerning the cause were ingenious, and would possibly be not altogether devoid of interest; but they are wholly unconnected with the object of these scanty reminiscences.

Whilst Shelley was still a boy, clubs were few in number, of small dimensions, and generally confined to some specific class of persons; the universal and populous clubs of the present day were almost unknown. His reputation has increased so much of late, that the honour of including his name in the list of members, were such a distinction happily attainable, would now perhaps be sought by many of these societies; but it is not less certain, that, for a period of nearly twenty years, he would have been black-balled by almost every club in London. Nor would such a fate be peculiar to him.

When a great man has attained to a certain eminence, his patronage is courted by those who were wont carefully to shun him, whilst he was quietly and steadily pursuing the path that would inevitably lead to advancement. It would be easy to multiply instances, if proofs were needed, and

this remarkable peculiarity of our social existence is an additional and irrefragable argument that the constitution of refined society is radically vicious, since it flatters timid, insipid mediocrity, and is opposed to the bold, fearless originality, and to that novelty, which invariably characterise true genius. The first dawnings of talent are instantly hailed and warmly welcomed, as soon as some singularity unequivocally attests its existence amongst nations where hypocrisy and intolerance are less absolute.

If all men were required to name the greatest disappointment they had respectively experienced, the catalogue would be very various; accordingly as the expectations of each had been elevated respecting the pleasure that would attend the gratification of some favourite wish, would the reality in almost every case have fallen short of the anticipation. The variety would be infinite as to the nature of the first disappointment; but if the same irresistible authority could command that another and another should be added to the list, it is probable that there would be less dissimilarity in the returns of the disappointments which were deemed second and the next in importance to the greatest, and perhaps, in numerous instances, the third would coincide. Many individuals, having exhausted their principal private and peculiar grievances in the first and

second examples, would assign the third place to some public and general matter.

The youth who has formed his conceptions of the power, effects, and aspect of eloquence from the specimens furnished by the orators of Greece and Rome, receives as rude a shock on his first visit to the House of Commons as can possibly be inflicted on his juvenile expectations, where the subject is entirely unconnected with the interests of the individual. A prodigious number of persons would, doubtless, inscribe nearly at the top of the list of disappointments the deplorable and inconceivable inferiority of the actual to the imaginary debate. It is not wonderful, therefore, that the sensitive, the susceptible, the fastidious Shelley, whose lively fancy was easily wound up to a degree of excitement incomprehensible to calmer and more phlegmatic temperaments, felt keenly a mortification that can wound even the most obtuse intellects, and expressed, with contemptuous acrimony, his dissatisfaction at the cheat which his warm imagination had put upon him. Had he resolved to enter the career of politics, it is possible that habit would have reconciled him to many things which at first seemed to be repugnant to his nature; it is possible that his unwearied industry, his remarkable talents and vast energy, would have led him to renown in that line as well as in another; but it is most

probable that his parliamentary success would have been but moderate. Opportunities of advancement were offered to him, and he rejected them, in the opinion of some of his friends unwisely and improperly; but perhaps he only refused gifts that were unfit for him: he struck out a path for himself, and, by boldly following his own course, greatly as it deviated from that prescribed to him, he became incomparably more illustrious than he would have been had he steadily pursued the beaten track. His memory will be green when the herd of every-day politicians are forgotten. Ordinary rules may guide ordinary men, but the orbit of the child of genius is essentially eccentric.

Although the mind of Shelley had certainly a strong bias towards democracy, and he embraced with an ardent and youthful fondness the theory of political equality, his feelings and behaviour were in many respects highly aristocratical. The ideal republic, wherein his fancy loved to expatiate, was adorned by all the graces which Plato, Xenophon, and Cicero have thrown around the memory of ancient liberty; the unbleached web of transatlantic freedom, and the inconsiderate vehemence of such of our domestic patriots as would demonstrate their devotion to the good cause, by treating with irreverence whatever is most venerable, were equally repugnant to his sensitive and reverential spirit.

As a politician, Shelley was in theory wholly a republican, but in practice, so far only as it is possible to be one with due regard for the sacred rights of a scholar and a gentleman; and these being in his eyes always more inviolable than any scheme of polity, or civil institution, although he was upon paper and in discourse a sturdy commonwealth-man, the living, moving, acting individual, had much of the senatorial and conservative, and was, in the main, eminently patrician.

The rare assiduity of the young poet in the acquisition of general knowledge has been already described; he had, moreover, diligently studied the mechanism of his art before he came to Oxford. He composed Latin verses with singular facility. On visiting him soon after his arrival at the accustomed hour of one, he was writing the usual exercise which we presented, I believe, once a week—a Latin translation of a paper in the Spectator. He soon finished it, and as he held it before the fire to dry, I offered to take it from him; he said it was not worth looking at; but as I persisted, through a certain scholastic curiosity to examine the Latinity of my new acquaintance, he gave it to me. The Latin was sufficiently correct, but the version was paraphrastic, which I observed; he assented, and said that it would pass muster, and he felt no interest in such efforts, and no desire to excel in

them. I also noticed many portions of heroic verses, and even several entire verses, and these I pointed out as defects in a prose composition. He smiled archly, and asked, in his piercing whisper—"Do you think they will observe them? I inserted them intentionally to try their ears! I once showed up a theme at Eaton to old Keate, in which there were a great many verses; but he observed them, scanned them, and asked why I had introduced them? I answered, that I did not know they were there: this was partly true and partly false; but he believed me, and immediately applied to me the line, in which Ovid says of himself—

'Et quod tentabam dicere, versus erat.'"

Shelley then spoke of the facility with which he could compose Latin verses; and, taking the paper out of my hand, he began to put the entire translation into verse. He would sometimes open at hazard a prose writer, as Livy, or Sallust, and by changing the position of the words, and occasionally substituting others, he would transmute several sentences from prose to verse — to heroic, or more commonly elegiac, verse, for he was peculiarly charmed with the graceful and easy flow of the latter—with surprising rapidity and readiness. He was fond of displaying this accomplishment during his residence at Oxford, but he forgot to

bring it away with him when he quitted the University; or perhaps he left it behind him designedly, as being suitable to academic groves only and to the banks of the Isis. In Ovid the facility of versification in his native tongue was possibly, in some measure, innate; although the extensive and various learning of that poet demonstrate that the power of application was not wanting in him; but such a command over a dead language can only be acquired through severe study.

There is much in the poetry of Shelley that seems to encourage the belief, that the inspiration of the Muses was seldom duly hailed by the pious diligence of the recipient. It is true, that his compositions were too often unfinished, but his example cannot encourage indolence in the youthful writer, for his carelessness is usually apparent only; he had really applied himself as strenuously to conquer all the other difficulties of his art, as he patiently laboured to penetrate the mysteries of metre in the state wherein it exists entire and can alone be attained—in one of the classical languages.

The poet takes his name from the highest effort of his art—creation; and, being himself a maker, he must, of necessity, feel a strong sympathy with the exercise of the creative energies. Shelley was exceedingly deficient in mechanical ingenuity; and he was also wanting in spontaneous curiosity re-

specting the operations of artificers. The wonderful dexterity of well-practised hands, the long tradition of innumerable ages, and the vast accumulation of technical wisdom, that are manifested in the various handicrafts, have always been interesting to me, and I have ever loved to watch the artist at his work. I have often induced Shelley to take part in such observations, and although he never threw himself in the way of professors of the manual erudition of the workshop, his vivid delight in witnessing the marvels of the plastic hand, whenever they were brought before his eyes, was very striking; and the rude workman was often gratified to find that his merit in one narrow field was, at once and intuitively, so fully appreciated by the young scholar. The instances are innumerable that would attest an unusual sympathy with the arts of construction even in their most simple stages.

I led him one summer's evening into a brick-field; it had never occurred to him to ask himself how a brick is formed; the secret was revealed in a moment; he was charmed with the simple contrivance, and astonished at the rapidity, facility, and exactness with which it was put in use by so many busy hands. An ordinary observer would have smiled and passed on, but the son of fancy confessed his delight with an energy which roused the attention even of the ragged throng, that seemed to exist

only that they might pass successive lumps of clay through a wooden frame.

I was surprised at the contrast between the general indifference of Shelley for the mechanical arts, and his intense admiration of a particular application of one of them the first time I noticed the latter peculiarity. During our residence at Oxford, I repaired to his rooms one morning at the accustomed hour, and I found a tailor with him. He had expected to receive a new coat on the preceding evening; it was not sent home, and he was mortified, I know not why, for he was commonly altogether indifferent about dress, and scarcely appeared to distinguish one coat from another. He was now standing erect in the middle of the room in his new blue coat, with all its glittering buttons, and to atone for the delay, the tailor was loudly extolling the beauty of the cloth and the felicity of the fit; his eloquence had not been thrown away upon his customer, for never was man more easily persuaded than the master of persuasion. The man of thimbles applied to me to vouch his eulogies; I briefly assented to them. He withdrew, after some bows, and Shelley, snatching his hat, cried with shrill impatience:

"Let us go!"

"Do you mean to walk in the fields in your new coat?" I asked.

"Yes, certainly," he answered, and we sallied forth.

We sauntered for a moderate space through lanes and bye-ways, until we reached a spot near to a farm-house, where the frequent trampling of much cattle had rendered the road almost impassable, and deep with black mud; but by crossing the corner of a stack-yard, from one gate to another, we could tread upon clean straw, and could wholly avoid the impure and impracticable slough.

We had nearly effected the brief and commodious transit, I was stretching forth my hand to open the gate that led us back into the lane, when a lean, brindled, and most ill-favoured mastiff, that had stolen upon us softly over the straw unheard, and without barking, seized Shelley suddenly by the skirts. I instantly kicked the animal in the ribs with so much force, that I felt for some days after the influence of his gaunt bones on my toe. The blow caused him to flinch towards the left, and Shelley, turning round quickly, planted a kick in his throat, which sent him away sprawling, and made him retire hastily among the stacks, and we then entered the lane. The fury of the mastiff, and the rapid turn, had torn the skirts of the new blue coat across the back, just about that part of the human loins which our tailors, for some wise, but inscrutable purpose, are wont to adorn with two buttons.

They were entirely severed from the body, except a narrow strip of cloth on the left side, and this Shelley presently rent asunder.

I never saw him so angry either before or since; he vowed that he would bring his pistols and shoot the dog, and that he would proceed at law against the owner. The fidelity of the dog towards his master is very beautiful in theory, and there is much to admire and to revere in this ancient and venerable alliance; but, in practice, the most unexceptionable dog is a nuisance to all mankind, except his master, at all times, and very often to him also, and a fierce surly dog is the enemy of the whole human race. The farm-yards, in many parts of England, are happily free from a pest that is formidable to everybody but thieves by profession; in other districts savage dogs abound, and in none so much, according to my experience, as in the vicinity of Oxford. The neighbourhood of a still more famous city, of Rome, is likewise infested by dogs, more lowering, more ferocious, and incomparably more powerful.

Shelley was proceeding home with rapid strides, bearing the skirts of his new coat on his left arm, to procure his pistols, that he might wreak his vengeance upon the offending dog. I disliked the race, but I did not desire to take an ignoble revenge upon the miserable individual.

"Let us try to fancy, Shelley," I said to him, as he was posting away in indignant silence; "that we have been at Oxford, and have come back again, and that you have just laid the beast low—and what then?"

He was silent for some time, but I soon perceived, from the relaxation of his pace, that his anger had relaxed also.

At last he stopped short, and taking the skirts from his arm, spread them upon the hedge, stood gazing at them with a mournful aspect, sighed deeply, and after a few moments continued his march.

"Would it not be better to take the skirts with us?" I inquired.

"No," he answered, despondingly, "let them remain as a spectacle for men and gods!"

We returned to Oxford, and made our way by back streets to our College. As we entered the gates, the officious scout remarked with astonishment Shelley's strange spenser, and asked for the skirts, that he might instantly carry the wreck to the tailor. Shelley answered, with his peculiarly pensive air, "They are upon the hedge."

The scout looked up at the clock, at Shelley, and through the gate into the street as it were at the same moment and with one eager glance, and would have run blindly in quest of them, but I drew

the skirts from my pocket, and unfolded them, and he followed us to Shelley's rooms.

We were sitting there in the evening, at tea, when the tailor who had praised the coat so warmly in the morning, brought it back as fresh as ever, and apparently uninjured. It had been fine-drawn; he showed how skilfully the wound had been healed, and he commended, at some length, the artist who had effected the cure. Shelley was astonished and delighted: had the tailor consumed the new blue coat in one of his crucibles, and suddenly raised it, by magical incantation, a fresh and purple Phœnix from the ashes, his admiration could hardly have been more vivid. It might be, in this instance, that his joy at the unexpected restoration of a coat, for which, although he was utterly indifferent to dress, he had, through some unaccountable caprice, conceived a fondness, gave force to his sympathy with art; but I have remarked in innumerable cases, where no personal motive could exist, that he was animated by all the ardour of a maker in witnessing the display of the creative energies.

Nor was the young poet less interested by imitation, especially the imitation of action, than by the creative arts. Our theatrical representations have long been degraded by a most pernicious monopoly, by vast abuses, and enormous corruptions, and by the prevalence of bad taste; far from

feeling a desire to visit the theatres, Shelley would have esteemed it a cruel infliction to have been compelled to witness performances that less fastidious critics have deemed intolerable. He found delight, however, in reading the best of our English dramas, particularly the masterpieces of Shakspeare, and he was never weary of studying the more perfect compositions of the Attic tragedians. The lineaments of individual character may frequently be traced more certainly, and more distinctly, in trifles than in more important affairs; for in the former the deportment, even of the boldest and most ingenuous, is more entirely emancipated from every restraint. I recollect many minute traits that display the inborn sympathy of a brother practitioner in the mimetic arts: one silly tale, because, in truth, it is the most trivial of all, will best illustrate the conformation of his mind; its childishness, therefore, will be pardoned.

A young man of studious habits, and of considerable talent, occasionally derived a whimsical amusement, during his residence at Cambridge, from entering the public-houses in the neighbouring villages, whilst the fen-farmers and other rustics were smoking and drinking, and from repeating a short passage of a play, or a portion of an oration, which described the death of a distinguished person, the fatal result of a mighty battle, or other im-

portant event, in a forcible manner. He selected a passage of which the language was nearly on a level with vulgar comprehension, or he adapted one by somewhat mitigating its elevation; and although his appearance did not bespeak histrionic gifts, he was able to utter it impressively, and what was most effective, not theatrically, but simply, and with the air of a man who was in earnest; and if he were interrupted or questioned, he could slightly modify the discourse, without materially changing the sense, to give it a further appearance of reality; and so staid and sober was the gravity of his demeanour as to render it impossible for the clowns to solve the wonder by supposing that he was mad. During his declamation the orator feasted inwardly on the stupid astonishment of his petrified audience, and he further regaled himself afterwards by imagining the strange conjectures that would commence at his departure.

Shelley was much interested by the account I gave him of this curious fact, from the relation of two persons, who had witnessed the performance. He asked innumerable questions, which I was in general quite unable to answer; and he spoke of it as something altogether miraculous, that any one should be able to recite extraordinary events in such a manner as to gain credence. As he insisted much upon the difficulty of the exploit, I told him

that I thought he greatly over-estimated it. I was disposed to believe that it was in truth easy; that faith and a certain gravity were alone needed. I had been struck by the story, when I first heard it; and I had often thought of the practicability of imitating the deception, and although I had never proceeded so far myself, I had once or twice found it convenient to attempt something similar. At these words Shelley drew his chair close to mine, and listened with profound silence and intense curiosity.

I was walking one afternoon, in the summer, on the western side of that short street leading from Long Acre to Covent Garden, wherein the passenger is earnestly invited, as a personal favour to the demandant, to proceed straightway to Highgate or to Kentish Town, and which is called, I think, James Street; I was about to enter Covent Garden, when an Irish labourer, whom I met, bearing an empty hod, accosted me somewhat roughly, and asked why I had run against him; I told him briefly that he was mistaken. Whether somebody had actually pushed the man, or he sought only to quarrel, and although he doubtless attended a weekly row regularly, and the week was already drawing to a close, he was unable to wait until Sunday for a broken head, I know not, but he discoursed for some time with the vehemence of a

man who considers himself injured or insulted, and he concluded, being emboldened by my long silence, with a cordial invitation just to push him again. Several persons not very unlike in costume had gathered round him, and appeared to regard him with sympathy. When he paused, I addressed to him slowly and quietly, and it should seem with great gravity, these words, as nearly as I can recollect them :—

"I have put my hand into the hamper; I have looked upon the sacred barley; I have eaten out of the drum! I have drunk and was well pleased: I have said, κὸγξ ὄμπαξ, and it is finished!"

"Have you, Sir?" inquired the astonished Irishman, and his ragged friends instantly pressed round him with "Where is the hamper, Paddy?"—"What barley?" and the like. And ladies from his own country, that is to say, the basket-women, suddenly began to interrogate him, "Now, I say, Pat, where have you been drinking? What have you had?"

I turned therefore to the right, leaving the astounded neophyte, whom I had thus planted, to expound the mystic words of initiation, as he could, to his inquisitive companions.

As I walked slowly under the piazzas, and through the streets and courts, towards the west, I marvelled at the ingenuity of Orpheus—if he were indeed the inventor of the Eleusinian mysteries—

that he was able to devise words that, imperfectly as I had repeated them, and in the tattered fragment that has reached us, were able to soothe people so savage and barbarous as those to whom I had addressed them, and which, as the apologists for those venerable rites affirm, were manifestly well adapted to incite persons, who hear them for the first time, however rude they may be, to ask questions. Words, that can awaken curiosity, even in the sluggish intellect of a wild man, and can thus open the inlet of knowledge!

"*Konx ompax*, and it is finished!" exclaimed Shelley, crowing with enthusiastic delight at my whimsical adventure. A thousand times as he strode about the house, and in his rambles out of doors, would he stop and repeat aloud the mystic words of initiation, but always with an energy of manner, and a vehemence of tone and of gesture, that would have prevented the ready acceptance, which a calm, passionless delivery had once procured for them. How often would he throw down his book, clasp his hands, and starting from his seat, cry suddenly, with a thrilling voice, "I have said *Konx ompax*, and it is finished!"

CHAPTER VII.

As our attention is most commonly attracted by those departments of knowledge which are striking and remarkable, rather than by those which are really useful, so, in estimating the character of an individual, we are prone to admire extraordinary intellectual powers and uncommon energies of thought, and to overlook that excellence which is, in truth, the most precious—his moral value. Was the subject of biography distinguished by a vast erudition? Was he conspicuous for an original genius; for a warm and fruitful fancy? Such are the implied questions which we seek to resolve by consulting the memoirs of his life. We may sometimes desire to be informed whether he was a man of nice honour and conspicuous integrity; but how rarely do we feel any curiosity with respect to that quality which is, perhaps, the most important to his fellows—how seldom do we desire to measure his benevolence! It would be impossible faithfully to describe the course of a single day in the ordinary

life of Shelley without showing, incidentally and unintentionally, that his nature was eminently benevolent—and many minute traits, pregnant with proof, have been already scattered by the way; but it would be an injustice to his memory to forbear to illustrate expressly, but briefly, in leave-taking, the ardent, devoted, and unwearied love he bore his kind.

A personal intercourse could alone enable the observer to discern in him a soul ready winged for flight, and scarcely detained by the fetters of body: that happiness was, if possible, still more indispensable to open the view of the unbounded expanse of cloudless philanthropy—pure, disinterested, and unvaried—the aspect of which often filled with mute wonder the minds of simple people, unable to estimate a penetrating genius, a docile sagacity, a tenacious memory, or, indeed, any of the various ornaments of the soul.

Whenever the intimate friends of Shelley speak of him in general terms, they speedily and unconsciously fall into the language of panegyric—a style of discourse that is barren of instruction, wholly devoid of interest, and justly suspected by the prudent stranger. It becomes them, therefore, on discovering the error they have committed, humbly to entreat the forgiveness of the charitable for human infirmity, oppressed and weighed down by

the fulness of the subject—carefully to abstain in future from every vague expression of commendation, and faithfully to relate a plain, honest tale of unadorned facts.

A regard for children, singular and touching, is an unerring and most engaging indication of a benevolent mind. That this characteristic was not wanting in Shelley might be demonstrated by numerous examples which crowd upon the recollection, each of them bearing the strongly impressed stamp of individuality; for genius renders every surrounding circumstance significant and important. In one of our rambles we were traversing the bare, squalid, ugly, corn-yielding country, that lies, if I remember rightly, to the south-west of Oxford; the hollow road ascended a hill, and near the summit Shelley observed a female child leaning against the bank on the right: it was of a mean, dull, and unattractive aspect, and older than its stunted growth denoted. The morning, as well as the preceding night, had been rainy: it had cleared up at noon with a certain ungenial sunshine, and the afternoon was distinguished by that intense cold which sometimes, in the winter season, terminates such days. The little girl was oppressed by cold, by hunger, and by a vague feeling of abandonment. It was not easy to draw from her blue lips an intelligible history of her condition. Love, however, is

at once credulous and apprehensive; and Shelley immediately decided that she had been deserted, and, with his wonted precipitation (for in the career of humanity his active spirit knew no pause), he proposed different schemes for the permanent relief of the poor foundling, and he hastily inquired which of them was the most expedient. I answered that it was desirable, in the first place, to try to procure some food, for of this the want was manifestly the most urgent. I then climbed the hill to reconnoitre, and observed a cottage close at hand, on the left of the road. With considerable difficulty—with a gentle violence, indeed—Shelley induced the child to accompany him thither. After much delay, we procured from the people of the place, who resembled the dull, uncouth, and perhaps sullen, rustics of that district, some warm milk.

It was a strange spectacle to watch the young poet, whilst, with the enthusiastic and intensely earnest manner that characterises the legitimate brethren of the celestial art—the heaven-born and fiercely inspired sons of genuine poesy—holding the wooden bowl in one hand and the wooden spoon in the other, and kneeling on his left knee, that he might more certainly attain to her mouth, he urged and encouraged the torpid and timid child to eat. The hot milk was agreeable to the girl, and its effects were salutary; but she was obviously uneasy

at the detention. Her uneasiness increased, and ultimately prevailed: we returned with her to the place where we had found her, Shelley bearing the bowl of milk in his hand. Here we saw some people anxiously looking for the child—a man and, I think, four women, strangers of the poorest class, of a mean, but not disreputable, appearance. As soon as the girl perceived them she was content, and taking the bowl from Shelley, she finished the milk without his help.

Meanwhile, one of the women explained the apparent desertion with a multitude of rapid words. They had come from a distance, and to spare the weary child the fatigue of walking farther, the day being at that time sunny, they left her to await their return; those unforeseen delays, which harass all, and especially the poor, in transacting business, had detained them much longer than they had anticipated.

Such, in a few words, is the story, which was related in many, and which the little girl, who, it was said, was somewhat deficient in understanding, as well as in stature, was unable to explain. So humble was the condition of these poor wayfaring folks, that they did not presume to offer thanks in words; but they often turned back, and with mute wonder gazed at Shelley, who, totally unconscious that he had done anything to excite surprise,

returned with huge strides to the cottage, to restore the bowl and to pay for the milk. As the needy travellers pursued their toilsome, and possibly fruitless journey, they had at least the satisfaction to reflect that all above them were not desolated by a dreary apathy, but that some hearts were warm with that angelic benevolence towards inferiors in which still higher natures, as we are taught, largely participate.

Shelley would often pause, halting suddenly in his swift course, to admire the children of the country-people; and after gazing on a sweet and intelligent countenance, he would exhibit, in the language and with an aspect of acute anguish, his intense feeling of the future sorrows and sufferings —of all the manifold evils of life—which too often distort, by a mean and most disagreeable expression, the innocent, happy, and engaging lineaments of youth. He sometimes stopped to observe the softness and simplicity that the face and gestures of a gentle girl displayed, and he would surpass her gentleness by his own.

We were strolling one day in the neighbourhood of Oxford, when Shelley was attracted by a little girl: he turned aside, and stood and observed her in silence. She was about six years of age, small and slight, bare-headed, bare-legged, and her apparel variegated and tattered. She was busily

employed in collecting empty snail-shells, so much occupied indeed, that some moments elapsed before she turned her face towards us. When she did so, we perceived that she was evidently a young gipsy; and Shelley was forcibly struck by the vivid intelligence of her wild and swarthy countenance, and especially by the sharp glance of her fierce black eyes. "How much intellect is here!" he exclaimed, "in how humble a vessel, and what an unworthy occupation for a person who once knew perfectly the whole circle of the sciences; who has forgotten them all, it is true, but who could certainly recollect them, although most probably she will never do so; will never recal a single principle of any one of them!"

As he spoke, he turned aside a bramble with his foot, and discovered a large shell, which the alert child instantly caught up and added to her store; at the same moment a small stone was thrown from the other side of the road; it fell in the hedge near us. We turned round and saw on the top of a high bank a boy some three years older than the girl, and in as rude a guise; he was looking at us over a low hedge with a smile, but plainly not without suspicion. We might be two kidnappers, he seemed to think: he was in charge of his little sister, and did not choose to have her stolen before his face. He gave the signal therefore, and she obeyed it, and

had almost joined him before we missed her from our side. They both disappeared, and we continued our walk.

Shelley was charmed with the intelligence of the two children of nature, and with their marvellous wildness: he talked much about them, and compared them to birds, and to the two wild leverets, which that wild mother, the hare, produces. We sauntered about, and half an hour afterwards, on turning a corner, we suddenly met the two children again full in the face. The meeting was unlooked for, and the air of the boy showed that it was unpleasant to him: he had a large bundle of dry sticks under his arm; these he gently dropped, and stood motionless with an apprehensive smile—a deprecatory smile. We were perhaps the lords of the soil, and his patience was prepared, for patience was his lot—an inalienable inheritance long entailed upon his line—to hear a severe reproof with heavy threats, possibly even to receive blows with a stick gathered by himself, not altogether unwittingly, for his own back; or to find mercy and forbearance. Shelley's demeanour soon convinced him that he had nothing to fear: he laid a hand on the round, matted, knotted, bare, and black head of each, viewed their moving, mercurial countenances with renewed pleasure and admiration, and shaking his long locks, suddenly strode away. "That little

ragged fellow knows as much as the wisest philosopher," he presently cried, clapping the wings of his soul, and crowing aloud with shrill triumph at the felicitous union of the true with the ridiculous, —"but he will not communicate any portion of his knowledge: it is not from churlishness however, for of that his nature is plainly incapable; but the sophisticated urchin will persist in thinking he has forgotten all that he knows so well. I was about to ask him myself to communicate some of the doctrines Plato unfolds in his 'Dialogues:' but I felt that it would do no good: the rogue would have laughed at me, and so would his little sister. I wonder you did not propose to them some mathematical questions: just a few interrogations in your geometry; for that being so plain and certain, if it be once thoroughly understood, can never be forgotten!"

A day or two afterwards (or it might be on the morrow) as we were rambling in the favourite region at the foot of Shotover Hill a gipsy's tent by the roadside caught Shelley's eye: men and women were seated on the ground in front of it, watching a pot suspended over a smoky fire of sticks. He cast a passing glance at the ragged group, but immediately stopped on recognising the children, who remembered us, and ran laughing into the tent. Shelley laughed also, and waved his hand, and the little girl returned the salutation.

There were many striking contrasts in the character and behaviour of Shelley, and one of the most remarkable was a mixture, or alternation, of awkwardness with agility—of the clumsy with the graceful. He would stumble in stepping across the floor of a drawing-room; he would trip himself up on a smooth-shaven grass-plot, and he would tumble in the most inconceivable manner in ascending the commodious, facile, and well-carpeted staircase of an elegant mansion, so as to bruise his nose or his lip on the upper steps, or to tread upon his hands, and even occasionally to disturb the composure of a well-bred footman; on the contrary, he would often glide without collision through a crowded assembly, thread with unerring dexterity a most intricate path, or securely and rapidly tread the most arduous and uncertain ways. As soon as he saw the children enter the tent, he darted after them with his peculiar agility, followed them into their low, narrow, and fragile tenement, penetrated to the bottom of the tent without removing his hat, or striking against the woven edifice. He placed a hand on each round, rough head, spoke a few kind words to the skulking children, and then returned not less precipitately, and with as much ease and accuracy, as if he had been a dweller in tents from the hour when he first drew air and milk to that day—as if he had been the descendant, not of a gentle house,

but of a long line of gipsies. His visit roused the jealousy of a stunted, feeble dog, which followed him and barked with helpless fury: he did not heed it, nor perhaps hear it. The company of gipsies were astonished at the first visit that had ever been made by a member of either University to their humble dwelling; but as its object was evidently benevolent, they did not stir or interfere, but greeted him on his return with a silent and unobserved salutation. He seized my arm, and we prosecuted our speculations, as we walked briskly to our college.

The marvellous gentleness of his demeanour could conciliate the least sociable natures, and it had secretly touched the wild things which he had thus briefly noticed.

We were wandering through the roads and lanes at a short distance from the tent soon afterwards, and were pursuing our way in silence; I turned round at a sudden sound;—the young gipsy had stolen upon us unperceived, and with a long bramble had struck Shelley across the skirts of his coat: he had dropped his rod, and was returning softly to the hedge.

Certain misguided persons, who, unhappily for themselves, were incapable of understanding the true character of Shelley, have published many false and injurious calumnies respecting him—some for

hire, others drawing largely out of the inborn vulgarity of their own minds, or from the necessary malignity of ignorance,—but no one ever ventured to say that he was not a good judge of an orange! At this time, in his nineteenth year, although temperate, he was less abstemious in his diet than he afterwards became, and he was frequently provided with some fine samples. As soon as he understood the rude but friendly welcome to the heaths and lanes, he drew an orange from his pocket, and rolled it after the retreating gipsy along the grass by the side of the wide road. The boy started with surprise as the golden fruit passed him, quickly caught it up, and joyfully bore it away, bending reverently over it, and carrying it with both his hands, as if, together with almost the size, it had also the weight of a cannon-ball.

His passionate fondness of the Platonic philosophy seemed to sharpen his natural affection for children, and his sympathy with their innocence. Every true Platonist, he used to say, must be a lover of children, for they are our masters and instructors in philosophy: the mind of a new-born infant, so far from being, as Locke affirms, a sheet of blank paper, is a pocket edition, containing every dialogue, a complete Elzevir Plato, if we can fancy such a pleasant volume; and, moreover, a perfect encyclopedia, comprehending not only the

newest discoveries, but all those still more valuable and wonderful inventions that will hereafter be made!

One Sunday we had been reading Plato together so diligently, that the usual hour of exercise passed away unperceived: we sallied forth hastily to take the air for half an hour before dinner. In the middle of Magdalen Bridge we met a woman with a child in her arms. Shelley was more attentive at that instant to our conduct in a life that was past, or to come, than to a decorous regulation of the present, according to the established usages of society, in that fleeting moment of eternal duration, styled the nineteenth century. With abrupt dexterity he caught hold of the child. The mother, who might well fear that it was about to be thrown over the parapet of the bridge into the sedgy waters below, held it fast by its long train.

"Will your baby tell us anything about pre-existence, Madam?" he asked, in a piercing voice, and with a wistful look.

The mother made no answer, but perceiving that Shelley's object was not murderous, but altogether harmless, she dismissed her apprehension, and relaxed her hold.

"Will your baby tell us anything about pre-existence, Madam?" he repeated, with unabated earnestness.

"He cannot speak, Sir," said the mother seriously.

"Worse and worse," cried Shelley, with an air of deep disappointment, shaking his long hair most pathetically about his young face; "but surely the babe can speak if he will, for he is only a few weeks old. He may fancy perhaps that he cannot, but it is only a silly whim; he cannot have forgotten entirely the use of speech in so short a time; the thing is absolutely impossible."

"It is not for me to dispute with you, Gentlemen," the woman meekly replied, her eye glancing at our academical garb; "but I can safely declare that I never heard him speak, nor any child, indeed, of his age."

It was a fine placid boy; so far from being disturbed by the interruption, he looked up and smiled. Shelley pressed his fat cheeks with his fingers, we commended his healthy appearance and his equanimity, and the mother was permitted to proceed, probably to her satisfaction, for she would doubtless prefer a less speculative nurse. Shelley sighed deeply as we walked on.

"How provokingly close are those new-born babes!" he ejaculated; "but it is not the less certain, notwithstanding the cunning attempts to conceal the truth, that all knowledge is reminiscence: the doctrine is far more ancient than the

times of Plato, and as old as the venerable allegory that the Muses are the daughters of Memory; not one of the nine was ever said to be the child of Invention!"

In consequence of this theory, upon which his active imagination loved to dwell, and which he was delighted to maintain in argument with the few persons qualified to dispute with him on the higher metaphysics, his fondness for children—a fondness innate in generous minds—was augmented and elevated, and the gentle instinct expanded into a profound and philosophical sentiment. The Platonists have been illustrious in all ages, on account of the strength and permanence of their attachments. In Shelley the parental affections were developed at an early period to an unusual extent: it was manifest, therefore, that his heart was formed by nature and by cultivation to derive the most exquisite gratification from the society of his own progeny; or the most poignant anguish from a natural or unnatural bereavement. To strike him here was the cruel admonition which a cursory glance would at once convey to him who might seek where to wound him most severely with a single blow, should he ever provoke the vengeance of an enemy to the active and fearless spirit of liberal investigation and to all solid learning—of a foe to the human race. With respect to the theory of the

pre-existence of the soul, it is not wonderful that an ardent votary of the intellectual should love to uphold it in strenuous and protracted disputation, as it places the immortality of the soul in an impregnable castle, and not only secures it an existence independent of the body, as it were, by usage and prescription, but moreover, raising it out of the dirt on tall stilts—elevates it far above the mud of matter.

It is not wonderful that a subtle sophist, who esteemed above all riches and terrene honours victory in well-fought debate, should be willing to maintain a dogma that is not only of difficult eversion by those, who, struggling as mere metaphysicians, use no other weapon than unassisted reason, but which one of the most illustrious Fathers of the Church—a man of amazing powers and stupendous erudition, armed with the prodigious resources of the Christian theology, the renowned Origen—was unable to dismiss; retaining it as not dissonant from his informed reason, and as affording a larger scope for justice in the moral government of the universe.

In addition to his extreme fondness for children, another, and a not less unequivocal, characteristic of a truly philanthropic mind, was eminently and still more remarkably conspicuous in Shelley—his admiration of men of learning and genius. In

truth, the devotion, the reverence, the religion, with which he was kindled towards all the masters of intellect, cannot be described, and must be utterly inconceivable to minds less deeply enamoured with the love of wisdom. The irreverent many cannot comprehend the awe—the careless apathetic worldling cannot imagine the enthusiasm—nor can the tongue that attempts only to speak of things visible to the bodily eye, express the mighty emotion that inwardly agitated him, when he approached, for the first time, a volume which he believed to be replete with the recondite and mystic philosophy of antiquity: his cheeks glowed, his eyes became bright, his whole frame trembled, and his entire attention was immediately swallowed up in the depths of contemplation. The rapid and vigorous conversion of his soul to intellect can only be compared with the instantaneous ignition and combustion, which dazzle the sight, when a bundle of dry reeds, or other light inflammable substance, is thrown upon a fire already rich with accumulated heat.

The company of persons of merit was delightful to him, and he often spoke with a peculiar warmth of the satisfaction he hoped to derive from the society of the most distinguished literary and scientific characters of the day in England, and the other countries of Europe, when his own attainments would justify him in seeking their acquaint-

ance. He was never weary of recounting the rewards and favours that authors had formerly received; and he would detail in pathetic language, and with a touching earnestness, the instances of that poverty and neglect, which an iron age assigned as the fitting portion of solid erudition and undoubted talents. He would contrast the niggard praise and the paltry payments, that the cold and wealthy moderns reluctantly dole out, with the ample and heartfelt commendation, and the noble remuneration, which were freely offered by the more generous but less opulent ancients. He spoke with an animation of gesture and an elevation of voice of him who undertook a long journey, that he might once see the historian Livy; and he recounted the rich legacies which were bequeathed to Cicero and to Pliny the younger, by testators venerating their abilities and attainments—his zeal, enthusiastic in the cause of letters, giving an interest and a novelty to the most trite and familiar instances. His disposition being wholly munificent, gentle, and friendly, how generous a patron would he have proved had he ever been in the actual possession of even moderate wealth!

Out of a scanty and somewhat precarious income, inadequate to allow the indulgence of the most ordinary superfluities, and diminished by various casual but unavoidable incumbrances, he was able,

by restricting himself to a diet more simple than the fare of the most austere anchorite, and by refusing himself horses and the other gratifications that appear properly to belong to his station, and of which he was in truth very fond, to bestow upon men of letters, whose merits were of too high an order to be rightly estimated by their own generation, donations large indeed, if we consider from how narrow a source they flowed. But to speak of this his signal and truly admirable bounty, save only in the most distant manner, and the most general terms, would be a flagrant violation of that unequalled delicacy with which it was extended to undeserved indigence, accompanied by well-founded and most commendable pride. To allude to any particular instance, however obscurely and indistinctly, would be unpardonable; but it would be scarcely less blameable to dismiss the consideration of the character of the benevolent young poet without some imperfect testimony of this rare excellence.

That he gave freely, when the needy scholar asked, or in silent, hopeless poverty seemed to ask, his aid, will be demonstrated most clearly by relating shortly one example of his generosity, where the applicant had no pretensions to literary renown, and no claim whatever, except perhaps honest penury. It is delightful to attempt to delineate from various

points of view a creature of infinite moral beauty—but one instance must suffice: an ample volume might be composed of such tales, but one may be selected, because it contains a large admixture of that ingredient which is essential to the conversion of alms-giving into the genuine virtue of charity—self-denial.

On returning to town after the long vacation, at the end of October, I found Shelley at one of the hotels in Covent Garden. Having some business in hand he was passing a few days there alone. We had taken some mutton chops hastily at a dark place in one of the minute courts of the city, at an early hour, and we went forth to walk; for to walk at all times, and especially in the evening, was his supreme delight.

The aspect of the fields to the north of Somers Town, between that beggarly suburb and Kentish Town, has been totally changed of late. Although this district could never be accounted pretty, nor deserving a high place even amongst suburban scenes, yet the air, or often the wind, seemed pure and fresh to captives emerging from the smoke of London: there were certain old elms, much very green grass, quiet cattle feeding, and groups of noisy children playing with something of the freedom of the village green. There was, oh blessed thing! an entire absence of carriages and of blood-

horses; of the dust and dress and affectation and fashion of the parks: there were, moreover, old and quaint edifices and objects which gave character to the scene.

Whenever Shelley was imprisoned in London—for to a poet a close and crowded city must be a dreary gaol—his steps would take that direction, unless his residence was too remote, or he was accompanied by one who chose to guide his walk. On this occasion I was led thither, as indeed I had anticipated: the weather was fine, but the autumn was already advanced; we had not sauntered long in these fields when the dusky evening closed in, and the darkness gradually thickened.

"How black those trees are," said Shelley, stopping short, and pointing to a row of elms; "it is so dark the trees might well be houses, and the turf, pavement,—the eye would sustain no loss; it is useless therefore to remain here, let us return." He proposed tea at his hotel; I assented; and hastily buttoning his coat, he seized my arm, and set off at his great pace, striding with bent knees over the fields and through the narrow streets. We were crossing the New Road, when he said shortly,

"I must call for a moment, but it will not be out of the way at all," and then dragged me suddenly towards the left. I inquired whither we were bound, and, I believe, I suggested the postponement of the

intended call till the morrow. He answered, it was not at all out of our way.

I was hurried along rapidly towards the left; we soon fell into an animated discussion respecting the nature of the virtue of the Romans, which in some measure beguiled the weary way. Whilst he was talking with much vehemence and a total disregard of the people who thronged the streets, he suddenly wheeled about and pushed me through a narrow door; to my infinite surprise I found myself in a pawnbroker's shop! It was in the neighbourhood of Newgate Street; for he had no idea whatever in practice either of time or space, nor did he in any degree regard method in the conduct of business.

There were several women in the shop in brown and gray cloaks with squalling children; some of them were attempting to persuade the children to be quiet, or at least to scream with moderation; the others were enlarging upon and pointing out the beauties of certain coarse and dirty sheets that lay before them to a man on the other side of the counter.

I bore this substitute for our proposed tea some minutes with tolerable patience, but as the call did not promise to terminate speedily, I said to Shelley, in a whisper, "Is not this almost as bad as the Roman virtue?" Upon this he approached the pawnbroker: it was long before he could obtain a

hearing, and he did not find civility. The man was unwilling to part with a valuable pledge so soon, or perhaps he hoped to retain it eventually; or it might be, that the obliquity of his nature disqualified him for respectful behaviour.

A pawnbroker is frequently an important witness in criminal proceedings: it has happened to me, therefore, afterwards to see many specimens of this kind of banker; they sometimes appeared not less respectable than other tradesmen, and sometimes I have been forcibly reminded of the first I ever met with, by an equally ill-conditioned fellow. I was so little pleased with the introduction, that I stood aloof in the shop, and did not hear what passed between him and Shelley.

On our way to Covent-Garden, I expressed my surprise and dissatisfaction at our strange visit, and I learned that when he came to London before, in the course of the summer, some old man had related to him a tale of distress,—of a calamity which could only be alleviated by the timely application of ten pounds; five of them he drew at once from his pocket, and to raise the other five he had pawned his beautiful solar microscope! He related this act of beneficence simply and briefly, as if it were a matter of course, and such indeed it was to him. I was ashamed of my impatience, and we strode along in silence.

It was past ten when we reached the hotel; some excellent tea and a liberal supply of hot muffins in the coffee-room, now quiet and solitary, were the more grateful after the wearisome delay and vast deviation. Shelley often turned his head, and cast eager glances towards the door; and whenever the waiter replenished our teapot, or approached our box, he was interrogated whether any one had yet called.

At last the desired summons was brought; Shelley drew forth some bank notes, hurried to the bar, and returned as hastily, bearing in triumph under his arm a mahogany box, followed by the officious waiter, with whose assistance he placed it upon the bench by his side. He viewed it often with evident satisfaction, and sometimes patted it affectionately in the course of calm conversation. The solar microscope was always a favourite plaything or instrument of scientific inquiry; whenever he entered a house his first care was to choose some window of a southern aspect, and, if permission could be obtained by prayer or by purchase, straightway to cut a hole through the shutter to receive it.

His regard for his solar microscope was as lasting as it was strong; for he retained it several years after this adventure, and long after he had parted with all the rest of his philosophical apparatus.

Such is the story of the microscope, and no rightly

judging person who hears it will require the further accumulation of proofs of a benevolent heart; nor can I, perhaps, better close these sketches than with that impression of the pure and genial beauty of Shelley's nature which this simple anecdote will bequeath.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE theory of civil liberty has ever seemed lovely to the eyes of a young man enamoured of moral and intellectual beauty; Shelley's devotion to freedom, therefore, was ardent and sincere. He would have submitted with cheerful alacrity to the greatest sacrifices, had they been demanded of him, to advance the sacred cause of liberty; and he would have gallantly encountered every peril in the fearless resistance to active oppression. Nevertheless, in ordinary times, although a generous and unhesitating patriot, he was little inclined to consume the pleasant season of youth amidst the intrigues and clamours of elections, and in the dull and selfish cabals of parties. His fancy viewed from a lofty eminence the grand scheme of an ideal republic; and he could not descend to the humble task of setting out the boundaries of neighbouring rights, and to the uninviting duties of actual administration. He was still less disposed to interest himself in the politics of the day, because he observed

the pernicious effects of party zeal in a field where it ought not to enter.

It is no slight evil, but a heavy price paid for popular institutions, that society should be divided into hostile clans to serve the selfish purposes of a few political adventurers; and surely to introduce politics within the calm precincts of an university ought to be deemed a capital offence—a felony without benefit of clergy. The undue admission (to borrow the language of universities for a moment) is not less fatal to its existence as an institution designed for the advancement of learning, than the reception of the wooden horse within the walls of Troy was to the safety of that renowned city.

What does it import the interpreters of Pindar and Thucydides, — the expositors of Plato and Aristotle, — if a few interested persons, for the sake of some lucrative posts, affect to believe that it is a matter of vital importance to the state to concede certain privileges to the Roman Catholics; whilst others, for the same reason, pretend with tears in their eyes, that the concessions would be dangerous, and, indeed, destructive, and shudder with feigned horror, at the harmless proposal? Such pretexts may be advantageous, and perhaps even honourable, to the ingenious persons who use them for the purposes of immediate advancement; but of what concernment are they to Apollo and the Muses?

How could the Catholic question augment the calamities of Priam, or diminish the misfortunes of the ill-fated house of Labdacus? or which of the doubts of the ancient philosophers would the most satisfactory solution of it remove? Why must the modest student come forth, and dance upon the tight-rope with the mountebanks, since he is to receive no part of the reward, and would not emulate the glory, of those meritorious artists? Yet did this most inapplicable question mainly contribute to poison the harmless and stupendous felicity which we enjoyed at Oxford.

During the whole period of our residence there, the University was cruelly disfigured by bitter feuds, arising out of the late election of its Chancellor: in an especial manner was our own most venerable college deformed by them, and by angry and senseless disappointment.

Lord Grenville had just been chosen. There could be no more comparison between his scholarship and his various qualifications for the honourable and useless office, and the claims of his unsuccessful opponent, than between the attainments of the best man of the year and those of the huge porter who, with a stern and solemn civility, kept the gates of University College,—the arts of mulled-wine and egg-hot being, in the latter case, alone excepted.

The vanquished competitor, however, most un-

fortunately for its honour and character, was a member of our college; and in proportion as the intrinsic merits of our rulers were small, had the vehemence and violence of electioneering been great, that, through the abuse of the patronage of the church, they might attain to those dignities, as the rewards of the activity of partisans, which they could never hope to reach through the legitimate road of superior learning and talents.

Their vexation at failing was the more sharp and abiding, because the only objection that vulgar bigotry could urge against the victor was his disposition to make concessions to the Roman Catholics; and every dull lampoon about popes, and cardinals, and the scarlet lady, had accordingly been worn threadbare in vain. Since the learned and the liberal had conquered, learning and liberality were peculiarly odious with us at that epoch. The studious scholar, particularly if he were of an inquiring disposition, and of a bold and free temper, was suspected and disliked: he was one of the enemy's troops. The inert and the subservient were the loyal soldiers of the legitimate army of the faith. The despised and scattered nation of scholars is commonly unfortunate; but a more severe calamity has seldom befallen the remnant of true Israelites than to be led captive by such a generation! Youth is happy, because it is blithe and healthful, and

exempt from care; but it is doubly and trebly happy, since it is honest and fearless—honourable and disinterested.

In the whole body of under-graduates, scarcely one was friendly to the holder of the loaves and the promiser of the fishes, Lord Eldon. All were eager —all, one and all—in behalf of the scholar and the liberal statesman; and plain and loud was the avowal of their sentiments. A sullen demeanour towards the young rebels displayed the annoyance arising from the want of success, and from our lack of sympathy; and it would have demonstrated to the least observant, that, where the Muses dwell, the quarrels and intrigues of political parties ought not to come.

By his family and his connexions, as well as by disposition, Shelley was attached to the successful side; and although it was manifest that he was a youth of an admirable temper, of rare talents and unwearied industry, and likely, therefore, to shed a lustre upon his college and the University itself; yet, as he was eminently delighted at that wherewith his superiors were offended, he was regarded from the beginning with a jealous eye.

A young man of spirit will despise the mean spite of sordid minds; nevertheless, the persecution which a generous soul can contemn, through frequent repetition, too often becomes a severe annoyance in

the long course of life; and Shelley frequently and most pathetically lamented the political divisions which then harassed the University, and were a more fertile source of manifold ills in the wider field of active life. For this reason did he appear to cling more closely to our sweet studious seclusion; and from this cause, perhaps, principally arose his disinclination,—I may say, indeed, his intense antipathy,—for the political career that had been proposed to him. A lurking suspicion would sometimes betray itself that he was to be forced into that path, and impressed into the civil service of the state,—to become, as it were, a conscript legislator.

A newspaper never found its way to his rooms the whole period of his residence at Oxford; but when waiting in a bookseller's shop, or at an inn, he would sometimes, although rarely, permit his eye to be attracted by a murder or a storm. Having perused the tale of wonder, or of horror, if it chanced to stray to a political article, after reading a few lines he invariably threw it aside to a great distance; and he started from his seat, his face flushing, and strode about, muttering broken sentences, the purport of which was always the same: his extreme dissatisfaction at the want of candour and fairness, and the monstrous disingenuousness, which politicians manifest in speaking of the characters and measures of their rivals. Strangers, who

caught imperfectly the sense of his indistinct murmurs, were often astonished at the vehemence of his mysterious displeasure.

Once, I remember, a bookseller, the master of a very small shop in a little country town, but apparently a sufficiently intelligent man, could not refrain from expressing his surprise that any one should be offended with proceedings that seemed to him as much in the ordinary course of trade, and as necessary to its due exercise, as the red ligature of the bundle of quills, or the thin and pale brown wrapper which enclosed the quire of letter-paper we had just purchased of him.

A man of talents and learning, who refused to enlist under the banners of any party, and did not deign to inform himself of the politics of the day, or to take the least part or interest in them, would be a noble and a novel spectacle; but so many persons hope to profit by dissensions, that the merits of such a steady lover of peace would not be duly appreciated, either by the little provincial bookseller or the other inhabitants of our turbulent country.

The ordinary lectures in our college were of much shorter duration, and decidedly less difficult and less instructive, than the lessons we had received in the higher classes of a public school; nor were our written exercises more stimulating than the oral.

Certain compositions were required at stated periods; but, however excellent they might be, they were never commended, — however deficient, they were never censured; and, being altogether unnoticed, there was no reason to suppose that they were ever read.

The University at large was not less remiss than each college in particular: the only incitement proposed was an examination at the end of four years. The young collegian might study in private as diligently as he would at Oxford, as in every other place; and if he chose to submit his pretensions to the examiners, his name was set down in the first, the second, or the third class,—if I mistake not, there were three divisions, — according to his advancement. This list was printed precisely at the moment when he quitted the University for ever;—a new generation of strangers might read the names of the unknown proficients, if they would.

It was notorious, moreover, that, merely to obtain the academical degrees, every new comer, who had passed through a tolerable grammar-school, brought with him a stock of learning, of which the residuum that had not evaporated during four years of dissipation and idleness, would be more than sufficient. The languid course of chartered laziness was ill-suited to the ardent activity and glowing zeal of Shelley.

Since those persons, who were hired at an enormous charge by his own family and by the state to find due and beneficial employment for him, thought fit to neglect this, their most sacred duty, he began forthwith to set himself to work. He read diligently,—I should rather say he devoured greedily, with the voracious appetite of a famished man,—the authors that roused his curiosity: he discoursed and discussed with energy; he wrote—he began to print—and he designed soon to publish various works.

He begins betimes who begins to instruct mankind at eighteen. The judicious will probably be of opinion that in eighteen years man can scarcely learn how to learn; and that for eighteen more years he ought to be content to learn; and if at the end of the second period he still thinks that he can impart anything worthy of attention, it is at least early enough to begin to teach. The fault, however, if it were a fault, was to be imputed to the times, and not to the individual, as the numerous precocious effusions of the day attest.

Shelley was quick to conceive, and not less quick to execute. When I called one morning at one, I found him busily occupied with some proofs, which he continued to correct and re-correct with anxious care. As he was wholly absorbed in this occupation, I selected a book from the floor, where there was

always a good store, and read in silence, for at least an hour.

My thoughts being as completely abstracted as those of my companion, he startled me by suddenly throwing a paper with some force on the middle of the table, and saying, in a penetrating whisper, as he sprung eagerly from his chair, "I am going to publish some poems."

In answer to my inquiries, he put the proofs into my hands. I read them twice attentively, for the poems were very short; and I told him there were some good lines, some bright thoughts, but there were likewise many irregularities and incongruities. I added, that correctness was important in all compositions, but it constituted the essence of short ones; and that it surely would be imprudent to bring his little book out so hastily; and I then pointed out the errors and defects.

He listened in silence with much attention, and did not dispute what I said, except that he remarked faintly that it would not be known that he was the author, and therefore the publication could not do him any harm.

I answered, that although it might not be disadvantageous to be the unknown author of an unread work, it certainly could not be beneficial.

He made no reply; and we immediately went out, and strolled about the public walks.

We dined, and returned to his rooms, where we conversed on indifferent subjects. He did not mention his poems, but they occupied his thoughts; for he did not fall asleep, as usual. Whilst we were at tea, he said abruptly, "I think you disparage my poems. Tell me what you dislike in them, for I have forgotten."

I took the proofs from the place where I had left them, and looking over them, repeated the former objections, and suggested others. He acquiesced; and, after a pause, asked, might they be altered? I assented.

"I will alter them."

"It will be better to rewrite them; a short poem should be of the first impression."

Some time afterwards he anxiously inquired—"But in their present form you do not think they ought to be published?"

I had been looking over the proofs again, and I answered: "Only as burlesque poetry;" and I read a part, changing it a little here and there.

He laughed at the parody, and begged I would repeat it.

I took a pen and altered it; and he then read it aloud several times in a ridiculous tone, and was amused by it. His mirth consoled him for the condemnation of his verses, and the intention of publishing them was abandoned.

The proofs lay in his rooms for some days, and we occasionally amused ourselves during an idle moment by making them more and more ridiculous; by striking out the more sober passages; by inserting whimsical conceits; and especially by giving them what we called a dithyrambic character, which was effected by cutting some lines in two, and joining the different parts together that would agree in construction, but were the most discordant in sense.

Although Shelley was of a grave disposition, he had a certain sly relish for a practical joke, so that it were ingenious and abstruse, and of a literary nature; he would often exult in the successful forgeries of Chatterton and Ireland; and he was especially delighted with a trick that had lately been played at Oxford, by a certain noble viceroy, at that time an undergraduate, respecting the fairness of which the University was divided in opinion, all the undergraduates accounting it most just, and all the graduates, and especially the bachelors, extremely iniquitous, and indeed popish and jesuitical. A reward is offered annually for the best English essay on a subject proposed: the competitors send their anonymous essays, each being distinguished by a motto; when the grave arbitrators have selected the most worthy, they burn the vanquished essays, and open the sealed paper endorsed with a corresponding motto, and containing the name of the victor.

On the late famous contention, all the ceremonies had been duly performed, but the sealed paper presented the name of an undergraduate, who is not qualified to be a candidate, and all the less meritorious discourses of the bachelors had been burnt, together with their sealed papers—so there was to be no bachelor's prize that year.

When we had conferred a competent absurdity upon the proofs, we amused ourselves by proposing, but without the intention of executing our project, divers ludicrous titles for the work. Sometimes we thought of publishing it in the name of some one of the chief living poets, or possibly of one of the graver authorities of the day; and we regaled outselves by describing his wrathful renunciations, and his astonishment at finding himself immortalised, without his knowledge and against his will: the inability to die could not be more disagreeable even to Tithonus himself; but how were we to handcuff our ungrateful favourite, that he might not tear off the unfading laurel, which we were to place upon his brow? I hit upon a title at last, to which the preeminence was given, and we inscribed it upon the cover. A mad washerwoman, named Peg Nicholson, had attempted to stab the King, George the Third, with a carving-knife; the story has long been forgotten, but it was then fresh in the recollection of every one; it was proposed that we should ascribe

the poems to her. The poor woman was still living, and in green vigour within the walls of Bedlam; but since her existence must be uncomfortable, there could be no harm in putting her to death, and in creating a nephew and administrator to be the editor of his aunt's poetical works.

The idea gave an object and purpose to our burlesque; to ridicule the strange mixture of sentimentality with the murderous fury of revolutionists, that was so prevalent in the compositions of the day; and the proofs were altered again to adapt them to this new scheme, but still without any notion of publication. When the bookseller called to ask for the proof, Shelley told him that he had changed his mind, and showed them to him.

The man was so much pleased with the whimsical conceit, that he asked to be permitted to publish the book on his own account; promising inviolable secrecy, and as many copies *gratis* as might be required: after some hesitation, permission was granted, upon the plighted honour of the trade.

In a few days, or rather in a few hours, a noble quarto appeared; it consisted of a small number of pages, it is true, but they were of the largest size, of the thickest, the whitest, and the smoothest drawing-paper; a large, clear, and handsome type had impressed a few lines with ink of a rich glossy black, amidst ample margins. The poor maniac laundress

was gravely styled "the late Mrs. Margaret Nicholson, widow;" and the sonorous name of Fitzvictor had been culled for her inconsolable nephew and administrator: to add to his dignity, the waggish printer had picked up some huge text types, of so unusual a form, that even an antiquary could not spell the words at the first glance. The effect was certainly striking: Shelley had torn open the large square bundle, before the printer's boy quitted the room, and holding out a copy with both his hands, he ran about in an ecstasy of delight, gazing at the superb title-page.

The first poem was a long one, condemning war in the lump; puling trash, that might have been written by a quaker, and could only have been published in sober sadness by a society instituted for the diffusion of that kind of knowledge which they deem useful—useful for some end which they have not been pleased to reveal, and which unassisted reason is wholly unable to discover. The MS. had been confided to Shelley by some rhymester of the day, and it was put forth in this shape to astonish a weak mind; but principally to captivate the admirers of philosophical poetry by the manifest incongruity of disallowing all war, even the most just, and then turning sharp round and recommending the dagger of the assassin as the best cure for all evils, and the sure passport to a lady's favour.

Our book of useful knowledge—the philosopher's own book—contained sundry odes and other pieces, professing an ardent attachment to freedom, and proposing to stab all who were less enthusiastic than the supposed authoress. The work, however, was altered a little, I believe, before the final impression; but I never read it afterwards, for when an author once sees his book in print, his task is ended, and he may fairly leave the perusal of it to posterity. I have one copy, if not more, somewhere or other, but not at hand. There were some verses, I remember, with a good deal about sucking in them; to these I objected, as unsuitable to the gravity of an university, but Shelley declared they would be the most impressive of all. There was a poem concerning a young woman, one Charlotte Somebody, who attempted to assassinate Robespierre, or some such person; and there was to have been a rapturous monologue to the dagger of Brutus. The composition of such a piece was no mean effort of the muse; it was completed at last, but not in time—as the dagger itself has probably fallen a prey to rust, so the more pointed and polished monologue, it is to be feared, has also perished through a more culpable neglect.

A few copies were sent, as a special favour, to trusty and sagacious friends at a distance, whose gravity would not permit them to suspect a hoax;

they read and admired, being charmed with the wild notes of liberty; some, indeed, presumed to censure, mildly, certain passages as having been thrown off in too bold a vein. Nor was a certain success wanting, —the remaining copies were rapidly sold in Oxford at the aristocratical price of half-a-crown for half-a-dozen pages. We used to meet gownsmen in High-street reading the goodly volume as they walked—pensive with a grave and sage delight—some of them, perhaps, more pensive, because it seemed to portend the instant overthrow of all royalty, from a king to a court-card.

What a strange delusion to admire our stuff—the concentrated essence of nonsense! It was indeed a kind of fashion to be seen reading it in public, as a mark of a nice discernment, of a delicate and fastidious taste in poetry, and the very criterion of a choice spirit.

Nobody suspected, or could suspect, who was the author; the thing passed off as the genuine production of the would-be regicide. It is marvellous, in truth, how little talent of any kind there was in our famous university in those days; there was no great encouragement, however, to display intellectual gifts.

The acceptance, as a serious poem, of a work so evidently designed for a burlesque upon the prevailing notion of the day, that revolutionary ruffians

were the most fit recipients of the gentlest passions, was a foretaste of the prodigious success, that, a few years later, attended a still more whimsical paradox. Poets had sung already that human ties put Love at once to flight; that at the sight of civil obligations he spreads his light wings in a moment, and makes default. The position was soon greatly extended, and we were taught, by a noble poet, that even the slightest recognition of the law of nations was fatal to the tender passion; the very captain of a privateer was pronounced incapable of a pure and ardent attachment; the feeble control of letters of marque could effectually check the course of affection; a complete union of souls could only be accomplished under the black flag. Your true lover must necessarily be an enemy of the whole human race—a mere and absolute pirate. It is true, that the tales of the love-sick buccaneers were adorned with no ordinary talent, but the theory is not less extraordinary on that account.

The operation of Peg Nicholson was bland and innoxious; the next work that Shelley printed was highly deleterious, and was destined to shed a baneful influence over his future progress; in itself it was more harmless than the former, but it was turned to a deadly poison by the unprovoked malice of fortune.

We had read together attentively several of the

metaphysical works that were most in vogue at that time, as "Locke concerning Human Understanding," and "Hume's Essays," particularly the latter, of which we had made a very careful analysis, as was customary with those who read the Ethics and the other treatises of Aristotle for their degrees. Shelley had the custody of these papers, which were chiefly in his handwriting, although they were the joint production of both in our common daily studies. From these, and from a small part of them only, he made up a little book, and had it printed, I believe, in the country, certainly not at Oxford. His motive was this. He not only read greedily all the controversial writings on subjects interesting to him, which he could procure, and disputed vehemently in conversation with his friends, but he had several correspondents with whom he kept up the ball of doubt in letters; — of these he received many, so that the arrival of the postman was always an anxious moment with him. This practice he had learned of a physician, from whom he had taken instructions in chemistry, and of whose character and talents he often spoke with profound veneration. It was, indeed, the usual course with men of learning formerly, as their biographies and many volumes of such epistles testify. The physician was an old man, and a man of the old school; he confined his epistolary discussions to matters of science, and so

did his disciple for some time; but when metaphysics usurped the place in his affections that chemistry had before held, the latter gradually fell into disceptations respecting existences still more subtle than gases and the electric fluid. The transition, however, from physics to metaphysics was gradual. Is the electric fluid material? he would ask his correspondent; is light — is the vital principle in vegetables — in brutes — is the human soul?

His individual character had proved an obstacle to his inquiries, even whilst they were strictly physical; a refuted or irritated chemist had suddenly concluded a long correspondence by telling his youthful opponent that he would write to his master, and have him well flogged. The discipline of a public school, however salutary in other respects, was not favourable to free and fair discussion; and Shelley began to address inquiries anonymously, or rather, that he might receive an answer, as Philalethes, and the like; but, even at Eton, the postmen do not ordinarily speak Greek—to prevent miscarriages, therefore, it was necessary to adopt a more familiar name, as John Short, or Thomas Long.

When he came to Oxford, he retained and extended his former practice without quitting the convenient disguise of an assumed name. His object in printing the short abstract of some of the doc-

trines of Hume was to facilitate his epistolary disquisitions. It was a small pill, but it worked powerfully; the mode of operation was this:—He enclosed a copy in a letter, and sent it by the post, stating, with modesty and simplicity, that he had met accidentally with that little tract, which appeared unhappily to be quite unanswerable. Unless the fish was too sluggish to take the bait, an answer of refutation was forwarded to an appointed address in London, and then in a vigorous reply he would fall upon the unwary disputant, and break his bones. The strenuous attack sometimes provoked a rejoinder more carefully prepared, and an animated and protracted debate ensued; the party cited, having put in his answer, was fairly in court, and he might get out of it as he could. The chief difficulty seemed to be to induce the person addressed to acknowledge the jurisdiction, and to plead; and this, Shelley supposed, would be removed by sending, in the first instance, a printed syllabus instead of written arguments. An accident greatly facilitated his object. We had been talking some time before about geometrical demonstration; he was repeating its praises, which he had lately read in some mathematical work, and speaking of its absolute certainty and perfect truth.

I said that this superiority partly arose from the confidence of mathematicians, who were naturally

a confident race, and were seldom acquainted with any other science than their own; that they always put a good face upon the matter, detailing their arguments dogmatically and doggedly, as if there was no room for doubt, and concluded, when weary of talking in their positive strain, with Q. E. D.: in which three letters there was so powerful a charm, that there was no instance of any one having ever disputed any argument, or proposition, to which they were subscribed. He was diverted by this remark and often repeated it, saying, if you ask a friend to dinner, and only put Q. E. D. at the end of the invitation, he cannot refuse to come; and he sometimes wrote these letters at the end of a common note, in order, as he said, to attain to a mathematical certainty. The potent characters were not forgotten when he printed his little syllabus; and their efficacy in rousing his antagonists was quite astonishing.

It is certain that the three obnoxious letters had a fertilising effect, and raised rich crops of controversy; but it would be unjust to deny that an honest zeal stimulated divers worthy men to assert the truth against an unknown assailant. The praise of good intention must be conceded; but it is impossible to accord that of powerful execution also to his antagonists; this curious correspondence fully testified the deplorable condition of education at that time.

A youth of eighteen was able to confute men who had numbered thrice as many years; to vanquish them on their own ground, although he gallantly fought at a disadvantage by taking the wrong side.

His little pamphlet was never offered for sale; it was not addressed to an ordinary reader, but to the metaphysician alone; and it was so short, that it was only designed to point out the line of argument. It was in truth a general issue; a compendious denial of every allegation; in order to put the whole case in proof; it was a formal mode of saying, you affirm so and so, then prove it; and thus was it understood by his more candid and intelligent correspondents. As it was shorter, so was it plainer, and perhaps, in order to provoke discussion, a little bolder, than Hume's Essays,—a book which occupies a conspicuous place in the library of every student. The doctrine, if it deserves the name, was precisely similar; the necessary and inevitable consequence of Locke's philosophy, and of the theory that all knowledge is from without. I will not admit your conclusions, his opponent might answer; then you must deny those of Hume: I deny them; but you must deny those of Locke also; and we will go back together to Plato. Such was the usual course of argument; sometimes, however, he rested on mere denial, holding his adversary to strict proof, and deriving strength from his weakness.

The young Platonist argued thus negatively through the love of argument, and because he found a noble joy in the fierce shocks of contending minds; he loved truth, and sought it everywhere, and at all hazards, frankly and boldly, like a man who deserved to find it; but he also loved dearly victory in debate, and warm debate for its own sake. Never was there a more unexceptionable disputant; he was eager beyond the most ardent, but never angry and never personal; he was the only arguer I ever knew who drew every argument from the nature of the thing, and who could never be provoked to descend to personal contentions. He was fully inspired, indeed, with the whole spirit of the true logician; the more obvious and indisputable the proposition which his opponent undertook to maintain, the more complete was the triumph of his art if he could refute and prevent him.

To one who was acquainted with the history of our University, with its ancient reputation as the most famous school of logic, it seemed that the genius of the place, after an absence of several generations, had deigned to return at last; the visit, however, as it soon appeared, was ill-timed.

The schoolman of old, who occasionally laboured with technical subtleties to prevent the admission of the first principles of belief, could not have been justly charged with the intention of promoting

scepticism; his was the age of minute and astute disceptation, it is true, but it was also the epoch of the most firm, resolute, and extensive faith. I have seen a dexterous fencing-master, after warning his pupil to hold his weapon fast, by a few turns of his wrist throw it suddenly on the ground and under his feet; but it cannot be pretended that he neglected to teach the art of self-defence, because he apparently deprived his scholar of that which is essential to the end proposed. To be disarmed is a step in the science of arms, and whoever has undergone it has already put his foot within the threshold; so is it likewise with refutation.

In describing briefly the nature of Shelley's epistolary contentions, the recollection of his youth, his zeal, his activity, and particularly of many individual peculiarities, may have tempted me to speak sometimes with a certain levity, notwithstanding the solemn importance of the topics respecting which they were frequently maintained. The impression, that they were conducted on his part, or considered by him, with frivolity, or any unseemly lightness, would, however, be most erroneous; his whole frame of mind was grave, earnest, and anxious, and his deportment was reverential, with an edification reaching beyond the age—an age wanting in reverence; an unlearned age; a young age, for the young lack learning. Hume permits no object of

respect to remain; Locke approaches the most awful speculations with the same indifference as if he were about to handle the properties of triangles; the small deference rendered to the most holy things by the able theologian, Paley, is not the least remarkable of his characteristics.

Wiser and better men displayed anciently, together with a more profound erudition, a superior and touching solemnity; the meek seriousness of Shelley was redolent of those good old times before mankind had been despoiled of a main ingredient in the composition of happiness, a well-directed veneration.

Whether such disputations were decorous or profitable may be perhaps doubtful; there can be no doubt, however, since the sweet gentleness of Shelley was easily and instantly swayed by the mild influences of friendly admonition, that, had even the least dignified of his elders suggested the propriety of pursuing his metaphysical inquiries with less ardour, his obedience would have been prompt and perfect.

Not only had all salutary studies been long neglected in Oxford at that time, and all wholesome discipline was decayed, but the splendid endowments of the University were grossly abused; the resident authorities of the college were too often men of the lowest origin, of mean and sordid souls, destitute of every literary attainment, except that brief and

narrow course of reading by which the first degree was attained; the vulgar sons of vulgar fathers, without liberality, and wanting the manners and the sympathies of gentlemen.

A total neglect of all learning, an unseemly turbulence, the most monstrous irregularities, open and habitual drunkenness, vice, and violence, were tolerated or encouraged, with the basest sycophancy, that the prospect of perpetual licentiousness might fill the colleges with young men of fortune; whenever the rarely exercised power of coercion was exerted, it demonstrated the utter incapacity of our unworthy rulers by coarseness, ignorance, and injustice.

If a few gentlemen were admitted to fellowships, they were always absent; they were not persons of literary pretensions, or distinguished by scholarship; and they had no more share in the government of the college than the overgrown guardsmen, who, in long white gaiters, bravely protect the precious life of the sovereign against such assailants as the tenth Muse, our good friend, Mrs. Nicholson.

As the term was drawing to a close, and a great part of the books we were reading together still remained unfinished, we had agreed to increase our exertions and to meet at an early hour.

It was a fine spring morning on Lady-day, in the year 1811, when I went to Shelley's rooms: he was

absent; but before I had collected our books he rushed in. He was terribly agitated. I anxiously inquired what had happened.

"I am expelled," he said, as soon as he had recovered himself a little, "I am expelled! I was sent for suddenly a few minutes ago; I went to the common room, where I found our master, and two or three of the fellows. The master produced a copy of the little syllabus, and asked me if I were the author of it. He spoke in a rude, abrupt, and insolent tone. I begged to be informed for what purpose he put the question. No answer was given; but the master loudly and angrily repeated, 'Are you the author of this book?' If I can judge from your manner, I said, you are resolved to punish me, if I should acknowledge that it is my work. If you can prove that it is, produce your evidence; it is neither just nor lawful to interrogate me in such a case and for such a purpose. Such proceedings would become a court of inquisitors, but not free men in a free country. 'Do you choose to deny that this is your composition?' the master reiterated in the same rude and angry voice." Shelley complained much of his violent and ungentlemanlike deportment, saying, "I have experienced tyranny and injustice before, and I well know what vulgar violence is; but I never met with such unworthy treatment. I told him calmly, but firmly, that I was determined not to

answer any questions respecting the publication on the table. He immediately repeated his demand; I persisted in my refusal; and he said furiously, 'Then you are expelled; and I desire you will quit the college early to-morrow morning at the latest.' One of the fellows took up two papers, and handed one of them to me; here it is." He produced a regular sentence of expulsion, drawn up in due form, under the seal of the college.

Shelley was full of spirit and courage, frank and fearless; but he was likewise shy, unpresuming, and eminently sensitive. I have been with him in many trying situations of his after-life, but I never saw him so deeply shocked and so cruelly agitated as on this occasion. A nice sense of honour shrinks from the most distant touch of disgrace—even from the insults of those men whose contumely can bring no shame. He sat on the sofa, repeating, with convulsive vehemence, the words, "Expelled, expelled!" his head shaking with emotion, and his whole frame quivering. The atrocious injustice and its cruel consequences roused the indignation, and moved the compassion, of a friend, who then stood by Shelley. He has given the following account of his interference:

"So monstrous and so illegal did the outrage seem, that I held it to be impossible that any man, or any body of men, would dare to adhere to it; but,

whatever the issue might be, it was a duty to endeavour to the utmost to assist him. I at once stepped forward, therefore, as the advocate of Shelley; such an advocate, perhaps, with respect to judgment, as might be expected at the age of eighteen, but certainly not inferior to the most practised defenders in good will and devotion. I wrote a short note to the master and fellows, in which, as far as I can remember a very hasty composition after a long interval, I briefly expressed my sorrow at the treatment my friend had experienced, and my hope that they would re-consider their sentence; since, by the same course of proceeding, myself, or any other person, might be subjected to the same penalty, and to the imputation of equal guilt. The note was despatched; the conclave was still sitting; and in an instant the porter came to summon me to attend, bearing in his countenance a promise of the reception which I was about to find. The angry and troubled air of men, assembled to commit injustice according to established forms, was then new to me; but a native instinct told me, as soon as I entered the room, that it was an affair of party; that whatever could conciliate the favour of patrons was to be done without scruple; and whatever could tend to impede preferment was to be brushed away without remorse. The glowing master produced my poor note. I acknowledged it; and he forth-

with put into my hand, not less abruptly, the little syllabus. 'Did you write this?' he asked, as fiercely as if I alone stood between him and the rich see of Durham. I attempted, submissively, to point out to him the extreme unfairness of the question; the injustice of punishing Shelley for refusing to answer it; that if it were urged upon me I must offer the like refusal, as I had no doubt every man in college would—every gentleman, indeed, in the University; which, if such a course were adopted with all,—and there could not be any reason why it should be, used with one and not with the rest,—would thus be stripped of every member. I soon perceived that arguments were thrown away upon a man possessing no more intellect or erudition, and far less renown, than that famous ram, since translated to the stars, through grasping whose tail less firmly than was expedient, the sister of Phryxus formerly found a watery grave, and gave her name to the broad Hellespont.

"The other persons present took no part in the conversation: they presumed not to speak, scarcely to breathe, but looked mute subserviency. The few resident fellows, indeed, were but so many incarnations of the spirit of the master, whatever that spirit might be. When I was silent, the master told me to retire, and to consider whether I was resolved to persist in my refusal. The proposal was fair enough.

The next day, or the next week, I might have given my final answer—a deliberate answer; having in the mean time consulted with older and more experienced persons, as to what course was best for myself and for others. I had scarcely passed the door, however, when I was recalled. The master again showed me the book, and hastily demanded whether I admitted, or denied, that I was the author of it. I answered that I was fully sensible of the many and great inconveniences of being dismissed with disgrace from the University, and I specified some of them, and expressed an humble hope that they would not impose such a mark of discredit upon me without any cause. I lamented that it was impossible either to admit, or to deny, the publication,—no man of spirit could submit to do so;—and that a sense of duty compelled me respectfully to refuse to answer the question which had been proposed. 'Then you are expelled,' said the master angrily, in a loud, great voice. A formal sentence, duly signed and sealed, was instantly put into my hand: in what interval the instrument had been drawn up I cannot imagine. The alleged offence was a contumacious refusal to disavow the imputed publication. My eye glanced over it, and observing the word *contumaciously*, I said calmly that I did not think that term was justified by my behaviour. Before I had concluded the remark, the master, lifting up the

little syllabus, and then dashing it on the table, and looking sternly at me, said, 'Am I to understand, sir, that you adopt the principles contained in this work?' or some such words; for, like one red with the suffusion of college port and college ale, the intense heat of anger seemed to deprive him of the power of articulation; by reason of a rude provincial dialect and thickness of utterance, his speech being at all times indistinct. 'The last question is still more improper than the former,' I replied,—for I felt that the imputation was an insult; 'and since, by your own act, you have renounced all authority over me, our communication is at an end.' 'I command you to quite my college to-morrow at an early hour.' I bowed and withdrew. I thank God I have never seen that man since: he is gone to his bed, and there let him sleep. Whilst he lived, he ate freely of the scholar's bread, and drank from his cup; and he was sustained, throughout the whole term of his existence, wholly and most nobly, by those sacred funds that were consecrated by our pious forefathers to the advancement of learning. If the vengeance of the all-patient and long-contemned gods can ever be roused, it will surely be by some such sacrilege! The favour which he showed to scholars, and his gratitude, have been made manifest. If he were still alive, he would doubtless be as little desirous that his zeal should now be remembered

as those bigots who had been most active in burning Archbishop Cranmer could have been to publish their officiousness, during the reign of Elizabeth."

Busy rumour has ascribed, on what foundation I know not, since an active and searching inquiry has not hitherto been made, the infamy of having denounced Shelley to the pert, meddling tutor of a college of inferior note, a man of an insalubrious and inauspicious aspect. Any paltry fellow can whisper a secret accusation; but a certain courage, as well as malignity, is required by him who undertakes to give evidence openly against another; to provoke thereby the displeasure of the accused, of his family and friends; and to submit his own veracity and his motives to public scrutiny. Hence the illegal and inquisitorial mode of proceeding by interrogation, instead of the lawful and recognised course by the production of witnesses. The disposal of ecclesiastical preferment has long been so reprehensible,—the practice of desecrating institutions that every good man desires to esteem most holy is so inveterate,—that it is needless to add that the secret accuser was rapidly enriched with the most splendid benefices, and finally became a dignitary of the church. The modest prelate did not seek publicity in the charitable and dignified act of deserving; it is not probable, therefore, that he is anxious at

present to invite an examination of the precise nature of his deserts.

The next morning, at eight o'clock, Shelley and his friend set out together for London on the top of a coach; and with his final departure from the University the reminiscences of his life at Oxford terminate. The narrative of the injurious effects of this cruel, precipitate, unjust, and illegal expulsion upon the entire course of his subsequent life would not be wanting in interest or instruction; of a period when the scene was changed from the quiet seclusion of academic groves and gardens, and the calm valley of our silvery Isis, to the stormy ocean of that vast and shoreless world, to the utmost violence of which he was, at an early age, suddenly and unnaturally abandoned.

CHAPTER IX.

"Thus not only were we driven rudely and lawlessly from a common table, spread for us by the provident bounty of our pious and prudent forefathers, where we had an undoubted right to be fed and nurtured; but my incomparable friend and myself were hunted hastily out of Oxford. The precipitate violence and indecent outrage was the act of our college, not of the University; the evildoers seemed to fear that, if we remained among them but a little while, the wrong might be redressed. It is true that I was told, but as it were at the moment of departure, that if it was inconvenient to us to quit the place so suddenly, we might remain for a time; and that, if Shelley would ask permission of the master to stay for a short period, it would most probably be granted. I immediately informed him of this proposal, but he was far too indignant at the insult which he had received, and at the brutal indignity with which he had been treated, to apply for any favour whatever, even if his life had

depended on the concession. The delicacy of a young high-bred gentleman makes him ever most unwilling to intrude, and more especially to remain in any society, where his presence is not acceptable. Nevertheless, I have sometimes regretted, and more particularly for the sake of my gifted friend, to whom the residence at Oxford was exceedingly delightful, and, on all accounts, most beneficial, that we yielded so readily to these modest, retiring feelings. For if license to remain for some days would have been formally given upon a specific application, no doubt it would have been tacitly allowed; although no request had been made, permission would have been implied. At any rate it is perfectly certain that force—brute force—would not have been resorted to; that the police of the University would never have been directed to turn us out of our rooms, and to drive us beyond the gates of our college, roughly casting the poor students' books into the street. The young martyr had never been told—he never received any admonition, not even the slightest hint, that his speculations were improper, or unpleasing to any one; those persons alone had taken notice of, or a part in, them to whom they were agreeable; persons, who, like himself, relished them, and had a taste for abstruse and, perhaps, unprofitable discussions.

Shelley was, as Ben Jonson says of Sir Kenelm

Digby, "a gentleman absolute in all numbers." His disposition was gentle and complying, and his deportment eminently gentlemanlike, and which seemed, on all occasions, in a striking manner to claim, one would think irresistibly, to be treated as a gentleman ought to be treated, with courtesy, consideration and kindness :—

> "In peace was never gentle lamb more mild
> Than was this young and princely gentleman."

There can be no reasonable doubt that he would at once have acceded to whatever had been proposed to him by authority; he would have foreborne everything that was deemed objectionable. In the first instance, surely he should have been admonished once and again; he ought to have been exacted five times at least before the outrageous sentence of outlawry was passed against him.

If he had disregarded repeated admonition (I am confident that he would have yielded to the first monitor) the milder punishment of rustication should have been first tried. To have been banished from Oxford, for a term or two, would have been a less immoderate chastisement, and it would have been deeply felt by an ingenuous youth to whom a college-life was in all respects suitable, and indeed charming; who seemed to be one of those modest, studious, recluse persons for whose special behalf universities and colleges were founded and are maintained.

Our college was denominated University College, but Liberty Hall would have been a more correct and significant name. Universal laziness was the order of the day, except so far as half-a-dozen scholars were concerned, who subsisted, in some measure, on eleemosynary foundations, and were no acquisition to the society; such people being usually the vulgar relatives or friends of the vulgar authorities of the place. In the evening unceasing drunkenness and continual uproar prevailed.

The observation, therefore, was not less just than happy, that our college must have been founded, not by King Alfred, as was asserted, but by his foes, the Danes; by barbarians, who quaffed mead to furious intoxication out of the skulls of their enemies; all men being accounted such who would read and write, or who had an inclination for such pursuits. The disorder was, in truth, intolerable. The perpetual intoxication doubtless was profitable, if not to the interests of learning and education, to the Oxford vintners; to vintagers, that from the fruit of the white blossomed sloe,

"Crushed the black poison of misused wine."

To ascribe a college to a particular county or district, is to devote it at once to vulgarity and barbarism; and fellowships, and other foundations, confined to some particular county or school, are invariably ill-bestowed, wasted, and thrown away.

This was our unfortunate position, and to a striking degree—in an excess—the milk of bounty had turned sour, our aliment was corrupted, our natural nutriment most unnaturally had become poison! In such a state of things nothing seemed to be forbidden; the notion that every one might follow his own devices, and do whatever he pleased, was perhaps a mistake; but it was a natural and surely a pardonable one. It ought to have been corrected by salutary precept and admonition, not blindly and fiercely chastised and overwhelmed by injustice, indignity, and insult. But it was necessary that the divine poet should fulfil his destinies; his high vocation was to be before and above his age. It was inevitable, and he could not but pursue it!

One thing, at least, is certain, that I bear them no ill-will; on the contrary, I earnestly desire to return good for evil—and indeed the greatest of all good—viz., to reform their famous and admirable university; to reform it effectually and thoroughly, so that it may be a credit to themselves and a blessing to the country and to posterity; and I feel strongly that it is my vocation to do this.

I heard an anecdote which may be repeated now, for it can never be out of place, respecting the University of Oxford, from a venerable friend who had resided many years in Italy; at Venice and Padua. The greater part of his time he had spent

at the latter remarkable and interesting city, and he had long been intimate with the professors of its celebrated university. Some of them he had found to be truly learned and liberal-minded men; of one professor in particular—I regret that I have forgotten his name—he often spoke with admiration, and related many things concerning him highly to his credit.

This gentleman had long been animated by an honourable curiosity to inform himself touching the condition of the other universities of Europe, and for several years had employed his leisure and vacations in visiting the most renowned of these institutions. He obtained introductions to the principal authorities at each seat of learning, and had been passed, duly furnished with letters of recommendation, from one university to another.

The Paduan professor had remained some weeks at Oxford, and had conversed with the principal persons. He said that he had been forcibly struck there with two very remarkable peculiarities, neither of which he had ever met with in any other university. The first was this: wherever he went it had been his practice to inquire, Whom do you consider as the first man among you in learning and talent? Who is the second? And who is your third? In every other university he had received a prompt and decided answer to these questions; here and

there he had met with some difference of opinion as to the name which ought to rank as the third,—but as to the first and second, they had been everywhere unanimous; and certainly his three questions had everywhere received an immediate and unhesitating answer. But at Oxford, and at Oxford only, as if they were all in a conspiracy together,—the phrase is the professor's,—to keep it a profound secret, nobody would ever even tell him who stood first. In what way, in what walk of science, in what department, in what branch of knowledge? Pray, tell me who is the first among you in any way? There was no answer; they all stood mute. Why was this?

The second remarkable peculiarity was this,—and, the Professor added, it made the first peculiarity still more striking and peculiar. At every other mart of learning he had often heard the answer "I do not know;" but at Oxford, never. Elsewhere I have asked a professor of astronomy some question regarding anatomy, or botany, and he had the courage and honesty at once frankly to answer, "I do not know." But at Oxford it really seemed as if everybody considered himself equally bound to be universal, to know everything, and to be able to give some sort of affirmative answer to every question, however foreign it might be to his ordinary and proper pursuits. There is so

much wisdom in answering seasonably, "I do not know," that in an university which has been celebrated, and accounted most wise for nine or ten centuries, I thought, for the credit of the place, I ought to get it once, at least, before I went away; so I tried hard, but I could never obtain it. Why was this?

I had called Oxford "a seat of learning." "Why do you call it so?" Shelley asked, warmly; "you have no right to call it so; such a place cannot be a seat of learning!" "Yes, it is a seat of learning, and I have a right to call it so. It is a seat in which learning sits very comfortably, well thrown back, as in an easy chair, and sleeps so soundly, that neither you, nor I, nor anybody else, can wake her."

It has been affirmed by ardent spirits,—and not, perhaps, altogether without some show of reason,—that if any of the scholars be suffered to quit Eton without a moderate, but lively feeling of religion, the authorities of that famous seminary ought to be scourged to death. And, moreover, that if a single student be permitted to depart from the Universities of Oxford or Cambridge, unimbued with genuine piety, the appliances of both universities, and especially of the former, being duly estimated, the heads of houses, the professors and tutors, deserve to be impaled alive, with their cold Bampton Lectures, tame unedifying

discourses, evidences, probabilities, credibilities, and the whole farrago of frigid rationalism, suspended round their necks. The Oxford Tracts, however, have, of late years somewhat redeemed the character of this ancient and renowned school of orthodox theology; had it been the fate of my incomparable friend to have met with these, or rather with some of them, with how much delight and instruction would he not have perused and profited by them.

Some slight advances have unquestionably been recently made towards removing the stigma of utter uselessness with which the University of Oxford has been branded; until lately it seemed to exist only for the discouragement of learning. For many years I desired, I trust, with no illiberal curiosity, and for a long time I desired it eagerly, to consult certain Greek and other MSS., deposited in the Bodleian and other libraries. I ventured sometimes to hint my wish to persons who were in a position to have granted it very easily; but I found no encouragement. At the best I was told, that if I went to Oxford, and procured the recommendation of some Master of Arts, I might enter those well-closed depositories, as others might, and could do as they did; what this was, I could never discover; probably to return as wise as they came. The scanty information, costively imparted, tempted

me only to postpone indefinitely the gratification of my wishes.

We had determined to quit Oxford immediately (this probably was a mistake), being under the ban of an absurd and illegal sentence. Having breakfasted together, the next morning, March 26, 1811, we took our places on the outside of a coach, and proceeded to London.

We put up for the night at some coffee-house near Piccadilly, and dined; and then we went to take tea in Lincoln's Inn Fields with Shelley's cousins. Here we passed a very silent evening; the cousins were taciturn people—the maxim of the family appeared to be, that a man should hold his tongue and save his money. I was a stranger; Bysshe (I heard him called by that name then for the first time; he was always called so by his family, probably to propitiate the old baronet) —Bysshe attempted to talk, but the cousins held their peace, and so conversation remained cousin-bound. At a coffee-house one can read nothing but a newspaper; this did not suit us; we went out after breakfast to look for lodgings.

We found several sets which seemed to me sufficiently comfortable, but in this matter Bysshe was rather fanciful. We entered a pleasant parlour,—a man in the street vociferated, "Mackarel, fresh mackarel!" or "Muscles! lilywhite muscles!"

Shelley was convulsed with horror, and, clapping his hands on his ears, rushed wildly out of doors. At the next house we were introduced to a cheerful little first floor, the window was open, a cart was grinding leisurely along, the driver suddenly cracked his whip, and Shelley started; so that would not do. At one place he fell in dudgeon with the maid's nose; at another he took umbrage at the voice of the mistress. Never was a young beauty so hard to please, so capricious! I began to grow tired of the vain pursuit. However, we came to Poland Street; it reminded him of Thaddeus of Warsaw and of freedom. We must lodge there, should we sleep even on the step of a door. A paper in a window announced lodgings; Shelley took some objection to the exterior of the house, but we went in, and this time auspiciously.

There was a back sitting-room on the first-floor, somewhat dark, but quiet; yet quietness was not the principal attraction. The walls of the room had lately been covered with trellised paper; in those days it was not common. There were trellises, vine-leaves with their tendrils, and huge clusters of grapes, green and purple, all represented in lively colours. This was delightful; he went close up to the wall, and touched it: "We must stay here; stay for ever!" There was some debate about a second bed-room, and the authorities

were consulted below; he was quite uneasy, and eyed the cheerful paper wistfully during the consultation. We might have another bed-room; it was upstairs. That room, of course, was to be mine. Shelley had the bed-room opening out of the sitting-room; this also was overspread with the trellised paper. He touched the wall and admired it.

"Do grapes really grow in that manner anywhere?"

"Yes, I believe they do!"

"We will go and see them then, soon; we will go together!"

"Then we shall not stay here for ever!"

When could we have the lodgings? Now, immediately. We brought our luggage in a hackney-coach. I had ordered a fire; to this he rather objected in a plaintive voice, staring piteously at the ripe clusters, and seeming actually to feel the genial warmth of the sweet South; but we were still in March, and had the grapes been real grapes, a cheerful fire was indispensable. The weather was fine; we took long walks together, as before, and we dined at some coffee-house, wherever we might chance to find ourselves at dinner-time, and returned to the trellised room to tea.

We walked one day to Wandsworth, where some of his younger sisters were at school. At that time Bysshe had a warm affection for his mother, and

was passionately fond of his sisters. I remained outside, whilst he went into the house for a little while. When we stopped at the gate, a little girl, eight or ten years old, with long, light locks streaming over her shoulders, was scampering about. "Oh! there is little Hellen!" the young poet screamed out with rapturous delight. On our return he informed me, that the pretty child was his third sister, and he then first told me the object of our walk; for he took a pocketful of cakes to a school-girl with as much mystery as Pierre and Jaffier plotted against the government of Venice. We read much together, and often read aloud to each other, leading a quiet, happy life. But Shelley was not so comfortable as he had been at Oxford; a college-life, with its manifold conveniences and all its appliances and aptitudes for study, exactly suited him.

As far as concerned myself, who have always been, to a great extent, a citizen of the world, it mattered little. I have long since forgiven them, if I had anything to forgive; but I can never pardon "the heavy-gaited toads" for the slights which they put upon my incomparable friend, and for the injuries and insults which they had so basely heaped on his unoffending head.

At that time "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers" attracted much attention. We had not yet seen it. Shelley bought the poem one morning

—a pretty little volume—at a bookseller's shop in Oxford Street. He put it under his arm, and we walked into the country; when we were sufficiently removed from observation, he began to read it aloud. He read the whole poem aloud to me with fervid and exulting energy, and all the notes. He was greatly delighted with the bitter, wrathful satire. There are good things in it — some strong and striking passages—but it did not much please me; it is full of pride, of hot, weak impatient indignation. I never read it myself, I only heard it read once during this country walk, and I never saw the volume again. When he had finished it, he put it into his pocket hastily, or perhaps rather intended to do so, and missed his pocket, or—and it was no uncommon case with him—his pocket had been torn out, or there was a hole at the bottom, for, when we got home, the book had disappeared. The poem afterwards became exceedingly scarce, so that a large price was often given for a copy, and some curious persons even took the trouble to transcribe it. I have met with such MSS. Such was his first introduction to Byron; such his first acquaintance with his brother poet, for he had never read those early attempts which were the moving cause of the furious onslaught.

Notwithstanding his admiration of the poem, he did not express, as was his course, whenever he was

pleased with any work, a desire or determination to become personally acquainted with the author. He did not foresee that their lives would be blended and bound up together, as they were subsequently; still less did he anticipate that the irate satirist would be his executor, and as such, at the expiration of a few short years, would preside at obsequies, so strange, so mournful! To us, blind mortals, ignorant of the future, this present life is hardly to be borne. If we knew what is to come, it would be absolutely intolerable!

We occasionally visited the cousins in Lincoln's Inn Fields again, to tea, or to dinner. They were mute, as before, and we met other cousins, not less reserved and retiring.

John G—— took us one Sunday morning into Kensington Gardens. We had never been there before. Bysshe was charmed with the sylvan—and in those days somewhat neglected—aspect of the place. It soon became, and always continued to be, a favourite resort. In the more retired parts of the gardens he especially delighted, and particularly in one dark nook where there were many old yew-trees.

One day we were invited to dine in Garden Court. Shelley, J. G., and myself, repaired thither. On our way I stopped to look at an object, which, so to say, I have seen every day of my life since, that is, for

some fifty years, but which was then new to me. I had seen fountains represented in books, in views of old-fashioned mansions, but, I think, I had never actually set my eyes on one before.

"How many dukes shall we have to-day, Bysshe?" John G—— asked.

"Several, no doubt."

I quitted the fountain, and considered much within myself what this question could mean. Having ascended pretty high, we arrived at the chambers of our host, and were welcomed. Two or three persons were there already. We were introduced to them, but of these none were dukes,—not one. We had a comfortable dinner

> Of steaks, and other Temple messes,
> Which some neat-handed Phillis dresses.

We heard them hissing in a small kitchen adjoining our dining-room, and Phillis brought them in, hot and hot. I still thought about the dukes, but I soon discovered what John G—— meant. No dukes were mentioned, but several marchionesses, countesses, and baronesses were named, at whose parties Tom had figured lately, and who were excessively flattered and gratified when they were assured of the satisfaction with their arrangements which he had condescendingly expressed. After dinner there was some port wine, and much conversation; it rolled

chiefly on the superiority of women. Bysshe spoke with great animation of their purity, disinterestedness, generosity, kindness, and the like. I supported him humbly and feebly, by affirming, that girls, as far as my observation went, learned more readily than boys, especially the mathematical sciences; that they had not the same repugnance to receive instruction—not the same antipathy to learning, but were happy to be taught.

John G——, a surgeon, said, the female sex had been unfairly treated; they had an undue share of pain, and sickness, and suffering, which they bore with an amount of patience and fortitude, of which men were incapable.

Most of these assertions met with warm opposition; one fierce little man in particular got wonderfully angry. "When I take to myself a wife, do you suppose I shall allow her to set herself up, as being cleverer than myself? No, indeed, I will just get a horsewhip, and I will soon beat her conceit out of her! You may take my word for it!"

His word was taken, but his arguments, if such they might be called, did not go for much.

Bysshe was disgusted with him, and in walking home, remarked: "Since mild expostulations were unavailing, the fellow" (so he termed the choleric little gentleman) "ought to have been thrown out of the window. What do you think, John?"

"I think, if that had been done, we should probably have had some very pretty cases of compound fractures!"

Shelley took me one Sunday to dine with his father, by invitation, at Miller's hotel, over Westminster Bridge. We breakfasted early, and sallied forth, taking, as usual, a long walk. He told me that his father would behave strangely, and that I must be prepared for him; and he described his ordinary behaviour on such occasions. I thought the portrait was exaggerated, and I told him so; he assured me that it was not.

Shelley had, generally, one volume at least in his pocket, whenever he went out to walk. He produced a little book, and read various passages from it aloud. It was an unfavourable and unfair criticism on the Old Testament, some work of Voltaire's if I mistake not, which he had lately picked up on a stall. He found it amusing, and read many pages aloud to me, laughing heartily at the excessive and extravagant ridicule of the Jewish nation, their theocracy, laws, and peculiar usages.

We arrived at the appointed hour of five at the hotel, but dinner had been postponed until six. Mr. Graham, whom I had seen before, was there. Mr. Timothy Shelley received me kindly; but he presently began to talk in an odd, unconnected

manner; scolding, crying, swearing, and then weeping again: no doubt, he went on strangely.

"What do you think of my father?" Shelley whispered to me.

I had my head filled with the book which I had heard read aloud all the morning, and I whispered in answer: "Oh, he is not your father. It is the God of the Jews; the Jehovah you have been reading about!"

Shelley was sitting at the moment, as he often used to sit, quite on the edge of his chair. Not only did he laugh aloud, with a wild, demoniacal burst of laughter, but he slipped from his seat, and fell on his back at full length on the floor.

"What is the matter, Bysshe? Are you ill? are you dead? are you mad? Why do you laugh?"

It was not easy to return a satisfactory answer to his father, or to Mr. Graham, who came to raise him from the ground; but the announcement of dinner put an end to the confusion.

We dined comfortably. Some time after dinner, Bysshe had gone out on an errand for his father,—I think, to order post-horses for the next morning. The father addressed me thus:

"You are a very different person, sir, from what I expected to find; you are a nice, moderate, reasonable, pleasant gentleman. Tell me what you

think I ought to do with my poor boy? He is rather wild, is he not?"

"Yes, rather."

"Then, what am I to do?"

"If he had married his cousin, he would perhaps have been less so. He would have been steadier."

"It is very probable that he would."

"He wants somebody to take care of him: a good wife. What if he were married?".

"But how can I do that? It is impossible; if I were to tell Bysshe to marry a girl, he would refuse directly. I am sure he would; I know him so well."

"I have no doubt that he would refuse, if you were to order him to marry; and I should not blame him. But if you were to bring him in contact with some young lady, who, you believed, would make him a suitable wife, without saying anything about marriage, perhaps he would take a fancy to her; and if he did not like her, you could try another."

Mr. Graham then interposed, and said that was an excellent plan, and Mr. Shelley conversed with him for some time in a low voice. They went over a list of young women of their acquaintance. I did not know these ladies even by name, so I paid little attention to their conversation, which terminated suddenly when Bysshe returned.

Another bottle of port was proposed, for the honourable member, whatever his merits or defects might be, was jolly and hospitable.

"They have older wine in this house, than any they have brought us yet; let us have a bottle of that!"

Nobody was inclined to drink more wine, and therefore we had tea. Mr. Graham made tea; he was Mr. Shelley's factotum, and he was always civil and attentive.

After tea our jovial host became characteristic again; he discoursed of himself and his own affairs; he cried, laughed, scolded, swore, and praised himself, at great length. He was so highly respected in the House of Commons: he was respected by the whole House, and by the Speaker in particular, who told him that they could not get on without him. He assured us that he was greatly beloved in Sussex. Mr. Graham assented to all this. He was such an excellent magistrate. He told a very long story, how he had lately committed two poachers: "You know the fellows, Graham, you know who they are."

Mr. Graham assented.

"And when they got out of prison, one of them came and thanked me."

Why the poacher was so grateful the worthy magistrate did not inform us.

"There is certainly a God," he then said; "there can be no doubt of the existence of a Deity; none whatever."

Nobody present expressed any doubt.

"You have no doubt on the subject, sir, have you?" he inquired, addressing himself particularly to me.

"None whatever."

"If you have, I can prove it to you in a moment."

"I have no doubt."

"But perhaps you would like to hear my argument?"

"Very much."

"I will read it to you, then."

He felt in several pockets, and at last drew out a sheet of letter-paper, and began to read.

Bysshe, leaning forward, listened with profound attention. "I have heard this argument before," he said; and, by-and-bye, turning to me, he said again, "I have heard this argument before."

"They are Paley's arguments," I said.

"Yes!" the reader observed, with much complacency, turning towards me, "you are right, sir," and he folded up the paper, and put it into his pocket; "they are Palley's arguments; I copied them out of Palley's book this morning myself: but Palley had them originally from me; almost everything in Palley's book he had from me."

When we parted, Mr. Shelley shook hands with me in a very friendly manner. "I am sorry you would not have any more wine. I should have liked much to have drunk a bottle of the old wine with you. Tell me the truth, I am not such a bad fellow after all, am I?"

"By no means."

"Well, when you come to see me at Field Place, you will find that I am not."

We parted thus; he lived just thirty-three years longer, but we never met again. I have sometimes thought that if he had been taken the right way, things might have gone better; but this his son, Bysshe, could never do, for his course, like that of true love, was not to run smooth.

"Palley's arguments! Palley's books!" I said to my friend, as we walked home.

"Yes; my father always will call him Palley; why does he call him so?"

"I do not know, unless it be to rhyme to Sally."

After a deep, long-drawn sigh he exclaimed: "Oh, how I wish you would come to Field Place! How I wish my father would invite you again, and you would come! You would set us all to rights, for you know how to put everybody in good humour."

The real author of the meagre and inconclusive

treatises, which had been published under the name of Paley, and had been erroneously received, as being the compositions of the Archdeacon of Carlisle, was manifestly fond of making a fuss, of attracting attention to himself and his concerns, and of filling a space in the eyes of so much of the public as could be induced to attend to his manifestations.

As a senator, an integral portion of the collective wisdom, he loved, if not in the honourable house, at least out of doors, to move standing orders, to carry resolutions, by which nothing was resolved, to give notices, to record protests, and, in one word, to give full play to the whole machinery of pompous folly. To draw up protocols, like an accomplished statesman, as he was, to pen diplomatic notes, to sketch the outline of treaties, and to submit propositions and articles of capitulation provisionally; all these devices and many more, he tried on with my family. But his success was small; for, although Mr. Speaker, as he said, could not get through the business of the Session without his powerful aid, he appeared to us all to be a bore of the first magnitude, and a serious impediment to the carrying into effect any ordinary arrangements. His talents and proficiency, in this line, will be best shown by a few specimens of his letters which I found amongst my father's papers after his death. The epistles of the beloved Timothy will speak for themselves.

To take umbrage at the poor man's noise and nonsense certainly appears to be no common weakness; to drink a bottle or two of the old port with him, to suffer him to go on in his own way and to talk himself to sleep, and then to take one's own course, would seem to be the easiest thing in the world; but, to a young man of genius, of transcendent talents, and of a fancy divinely poetic, nothing is difficult, except to keep in the well-worn ruts and beaten road of civil life. It is only fair to the poor old governor to add, that he was the kind master of old and attached servants, and that his surviving children speak of him at this hour with affection.

FIELD PLACE, *March* 27, 1811.

SIR,

The invitation, my son wrote me word, that you would accept to spend the Easter vacation at Field Place,—I am sorry to say the late occurrence at University College must of necessity preclude me that pleasure, as I shall have to bear up against the affliction that such a business has occasioned.

I am your very humble servant,

T. SHELLEY.

To T. J. H.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, *April* 5, 1811.

SIR,

I have the honour to address you upon the

subject of the unfortunate affair that has happened to my son and yours, at University College, Oxford. I have endeavoured to part them by directing my son to return home, and also giving the same advice to your son; and backed by that opinion by men of rank and influence, therefore I would suggest to you to come to London, and try our joint endeavours for that purpose.

I have not seen your son, nor have I as yet seen my own, but I must do so very soon.

They are at No. 15, Poland Street, Oxford Road. Have the goodness to address me Miller's Hotel, Westminster Bridge. I am at a loss now to know whom I address, not being able to get the direction. These youngsters must be parted, and the fathers must exert themselves. The favour of your answer will oblige. Should I be in the country when you come up, I can very soon be here.

I have the honour to be, sir,
Your very obedient, humble servant,

T. SHELLEY.

Sir James Graham tells me there are several of the name, therefore into whosever's hands this comes, will have the goodness to find out the right person.

To J. Hogg, Esq., Stockton-on-Tees.

MILLER'S HOTEL, *April* 5, 1811.

MY DEAR BOY,

I am unwilling to receive and act on the information you gave me on Sunday, as the ultimate determination of your mind. The disgrace which hangs over you is most serious, and though I have felt as a father, and sympathised in the misfortune which your criminal opinions and improper acts have begot; yet, you must know, that I have a duty to perform to my own character, as well as to your young brother and sisters. Above all, my feelings as a Christian require from me a decided and firm conduct towards you.

If you shall require aid or assistance from me—or any protection—you must please yourself to me:

1st. To go immediately to Field Place, and to abstain from all communication with Mr. Hogg, for some considerable time.

2nd. That you shall place yourself under the care and society of such gentleman as I shall appoint, and attend to his instructions and directions he shall give.

These terms are so necessary to your well-being, and to the value which I cannot but entertain, that you may abandon your errors and present unjustifiable and wicked opinions, that I am resolved to withdraw myself from you, and leave you to the

punishment and misery that belongs to the wicked pursuit of an opinion so diabolical and wicked as that which you have dared to declare, if you shall not accept the proposals. I shall go home on Thursday.

I am your affectionate

And most afflicted Father,

T. SHELLEY.

To P. B. S.

MILLER'S HOTEL, *April* 6, 1811.

SIR,

Since I wrote yesterday, I find that I did not address the letter right, yet it may reach you. However, as I am just come from Mr. Wharton, who told me that you lived at Norton, near Stockton, I have only to urge you to get your young man home. They want to get into professions together. If possible they must be parted, for such monstrous opinions that occupy their thoughts are by no means in their favour.

I hope you have received my letter of yesterday, and will take immediate means of acting as you think proper. This is a most deplorable case, and I fear we shall have much trouble to root it out.

Paley's Natural Theology I shall recommend my young man to read, it is extremely applicable. I

shall read it with him. A father so employed, must impress his mind more sensibly than a stranger. I shall exhort him to divest himself of all prejudice already imbibed from his false reasoning, and to bring a willing mind to a work so essential to his own and his family's happiness.

I understand you have more children. God grant they may turn out well, and this young man see his error.

I remain your obedient

And afflicted Fellow-sufferer,

T. SHELLEY.

To John Hogg, Esq., Norton.

FIELD PLACE, *April* 14, 1811.

SIR,

This morning I received a letter from my son, who said, he and Mr. Hogg junior had submitted proposals to Mr. Hogg, who had done them the honour of expressing his approbation of them, with the condition of mine.

I found I could do no more with either of them, and as the letter came from the Rev. Mr. F., whose character must be mild and benevolent indeed; yet I consider it right to give my business into Mr. W.'s hands, to guard my honour and character in case of any prosecutions in the Courts, and to

direct my son to do what was right in the first instance, so he will now.

Mr. Hogg must be deceived, if he agrees to the proposals. Indeed, what right have these opinionated youngsters to do any such thing? Undutiful and disrespectful to a degree! viz.:

The parties think it their duty to *demand* an unrestrained correspondence.

When Mr. T. J. H. enters at the inns of Court, or commences any other profession, that Mr. P. B. Shelley may be permitted to select that intention in life, which may be consonant with his intentions, to which he may judge his abilities adequate.

Surely, sir, Mr. Hogg never could agree to such insolence.

I beg my compliments to Mr. Hogg, and hope he will be firm and decided with these misguided youngsters.

I am, sir, your very humble servant,

T. SHELLEY.

Desire Mr. Hogg junior to inform you of our conversation, &c., last Sunday. You say the person's name is Clarke, where you lodge.

To Mr. R. C.
(On the part of John Hogg, Esq.)

Such were our venerable friend's letters of business. With regard to his literary correspondence, a

few words may be said. He was not "an illiterate country gentleman," as he has been styled, most incorrectly; he certainly was not a man of letters or of learning, but he was not without literary tastes and dispositions. In his frequent letters to my friend, and in discourse with him, he constantly urged his son to acquire knowledge, to read hard, and particularly to distinguish himself at the University. He proposed to him to enter into competition for a prize poem; and, to enable him the better to make the attempt, he induced a distinguished scholar, a considerable antiquary and an eminent man, the Rev. Edward Dallaway, vicar of Leatherhead, secretary to the Earl Marshal, and the historian of the county of Sussex, to furnish in a long letter, accompanied with sketches, much valuable information, relative to a subject which had been offered by the University. Shelley actually began to compose the poem, but he did not complete it, because he was sent away from Oxford before the time arrived for submitting his attempt to the judges of poetic superiority.

His father's epistles to Shelley invariably commenced with, "My dear boy," like the celebrated Letters of the Earl of Chesterfield to his Son, and indeed the writer hinted pretty plainly, that he closely resembled the noble Earl in elegance and accomplishments, as well as in worldly wisdom.

The letters were very peculiar; he began with one subject, and always suddenly broke off, sometimes even in the middle of a sentence, and entered upon, or rather went on with, a totally different topic; as if he had laid aside the letter, and on taking it up again after an interval, had finished it, without recollecting at all, or referring to, what he had previously written. They were exactly like letters that had been cut in two, and the pieces afterwards joined at hazard; cross readings, as it were, cross questions and crooked answers. Shelley gave me some samples as epistolary curiosities; I regret that I have mislaid them, so that I cannot, at present, exhibit—"disjecti membra poetæ"—the members of sentences of the "tattered and torn" father of a poet. Not unfrequently did these instructive missives scold the "dear boy,"—scold him nobly, gloriously, royally, for Bysshe provoked his somewhat irritable parent, and often unintentionally:

"Where furious *Frank* and fiery Hun."

Furious letters, franked by the fiery Hun himself, came to us from Horsham, this silly verse from silly Tom Campbell's silly poem. "Hohenlinden" was applied to them, and it somewhat consoled the scolded one. He affirmed, that the application was in Ciceronian phrase, "haud illepidum," not unfunny; thereby meaning exceedingly droll.

It is certain, however, that "the late occurrence at University College," as Mr. Shelley mildly terms the stupid outrage perpetrated upon his son, because an innocent and insignificant thesis had been propounded for the delectation of lovers of logomachy, of logical quirks, and of subtle, metaphysical quibbles, annoyed him greatly; and it is equally certain that, in his political position, as a constitutional whig, there was some foundation for his annoyance. As to my own family, and my immediate connections, we were all persons whose first toast after dinner was, invariably, "Church and State!"—warm partisans of William Pitt, of the highest Church, and of the high Tory party; consequently, we were anything but intolerant,—we were above suspicion, above ordinances. I speak of the Tories of the good old times—of fine old English gentlemen of the old school—of men who wore the Windsor uniform before Peel and his Manchester men had mixed their Shoddy with the sound, home-grown wool of honest Yorkshire broadcloth! My relatives felt that they had margin enough—plenty of sea-room, that whatever might be said or done, their good principles could not be doubted, but would always carry them through. With the buff and blue folks it was far otherwise; they had already gone to what they conceived to be the extreme verge of free opinions and practices, yet without having gone far enough to

satisfy the demands of many of their adherents; and they were obliged to stand trembling and shivering at the farthest point of liberality, and were apparently in constant dread of having actually ventured to take a position in which they might have done themselves and their followers some real service. These people feared lest they should, peradventure, be accounted Republicans, Jacobins, Levellers, Atheists.

If the "Age of Reason" had been re-published by myself or by one of my earliest friends, the world would have supposed that it was put forth merely to show the utter futility and impotence, and vanity of the author's arguments; or in order to invite a more complete and conclusive refutation than Bishop Watson and the other feeble champions of the faith had hitherto produced. Whereas, if the heroes of Whiggery—Grey and Grenville—and the small wits of Holland House, had sent the decried work into general circulation, men would have exclaimed with one voice,—they have thrown off the mask at last, and have come forward, openly professing to be such as we always thought they were.

The good old adage says, and says truly,—One man may steal a horse with impunity, whilst another must not even look over the hedge. It was not wonderful that the clients of the poor Duke

of Norfolk, who, it was currently reported, had gotten woefully into the wrong box, and into sad disgrace, by proposing, as a toast at a public dinner, "The Majesty of the People!"—should be nervously apprehensive, lest another decisive step should be taken in the same wrong and dangerous direction.

Much has been said and written about the intolerance and persecution of Priests, and if the word Priest be used to denote those gentry who presided over the Spanish Inquisition and other similar establishments, the complaint, if there be any truth in history, would seem to be but too well founded. But with regard to clergymen of the established church, in justice to them, I am bound by gratitude to declare, that I never met with anything at their hands but kindness, hospitality, and liberality, and not merely towards myself alone; and, I believe, I never merited any other treatment from them; but with reference also to my illustrious friend, who was doubtless represented sometimes—for the most part falsely—as having evinced a certain hostility towards their order. It is only right, therefore, to add, that no individual of the English clergy ever spoke of him to me save in terms of respect; fully and freely acknowledging his remarkable talents, and readily conceding, that young men of genius, and of active and inquiring minds, frequently encounter serious

doubts and difficulties at the commencement of their studies, which farther progress and perseverance in learning, and a more mature judgment, finally solve and gradually dissipate. If I have ever heard my friend treated unhandsomely and contemptuously, it has been by ignorant and bigoted sectaries, these being, in matters of faith and religious doctrine, commonly of the lowest denomination.

I am constrained, however, to except, from this honourable testimony, the paltry and pitiful persecution which he suffered at Oxford; which, paltry and pitiful as it unquestionably was, must, nevertheless, be duly expiated. The narrow society of our small college was degraded and brutalised by habitual drunkenness, or by the habitual toleration of it in others; if a hungry young soul had been led forth to pasture upon less barren lands, and under the guidance of truer shepherds, than were those who brought eternal infamy upon the foundations of the great and good Alfred, the result, at least to ordinary apprehensions, would have been most probably less unsatisfactory.

Shelley was caught one day at Oxford by a violent shower, and a furious and sudden storm of wind; he took shelter under some of the buildings of a college, —if I mistake not, Wadham. A gentleman saw him from a window, and invited him to come and sit in his rooms until the rain should cease. He did so;

and they had a long and interesting conversation. The stranger spoke of metaphysical and religious subjects, acknowledging frankly that there are many perplexities, difficulties, and obscurities, and that any man, who thought at all — more especially a young man — must feel these sensibly; that Locke and Paley, and the ordinary routine of instructors, could not resolve these; on the contrary, their much vaunted volumes only augmented and increased them; for entire satisfaction and full solution it was quite indispensable to apply to other and different, to more profound and higher authorities.

After a very long conversation and much discussion, and many learned doubts, the weather having cleared up, Shelley quitted the dialectitian, being invited to call again, to come and renew their discourse, and to improve their acquaintance. This he did several times, and paid many visits to Wadham, if indeed that college was the scene of the friendly disputations. He generally gave me an account of what was said, expressing always in warm terms his sense of the candour, intelligence, learning, and liberality of his new friend. If he ever told me the name, I have forgotten it; as also whether he was a tutor, one of the fellows, or only an inmate of the college; whether he was a layman or a clergyman. I have often thought that if his good star had led

him to a college where he would have been treated frankly, kindly, and handsomely, the result of his academical residence would have been altogether different and more beneficial; however, it was pre-ordained, and no doubt for the wisest purposes, that his lofty, daring spirit should undergo the baptism, not of water, but of fire.

A student was seldom expelled from either of the Universities, rarely indeed from Oxford, for any serious and discreditable cause. It commonly occurred because the pompous folly and preposterous self-importance of some vulgar upstart,—some Jack-in-office, some beggar on horseback, some servitor or chapel-clerk, who had been most improperly lifted up and exalted into a little, brief, local authority, had been wounded in his silly pride by what he was pleased to consider insubordination and a breach of discipline. Consequently, there was little disgrace in the infliction, and the mark of paltry, petty, pitiful vengeance was universally and utterly despised. Although this is certainly the case, and the stigma is disregarded, the outrage against my incomparable friend was not the less abominable. The opprobrium under which the University fell on that account is not the less crying and flagrant.

Many zealous and ardent worshippers of genius maintain, that the execrable crime demands solemn and public expiation, by conspicuous atonement, by

some striking and lasting tribute to the memory of the highly gifted and insulted party. They contend that inasmuch as the duration of a body corporate is eternal, and through perpetual succession the individuality and personality are unchanged, the present authorities of the University are not less amenable or liable to disgrace, censure, and punishment, to condign punishment, than were those wretched men whose hands actually struck the base and cowardly blow. In strict justice, therefore, they urge that, unless honourable amends be forthwith made, the Vice-Chancellor and Proctors of the University, and the Master of University College ought to be scourged, openly and severely, throughout the whole length of High Street.

The same strictness of the highest justice also peremptorily demands, as they, nothing doubting, do assert, that bareheaded and barefooted, with no other garment than their shirts, and with halters round their necks, having received the prescribed number of stripes, they should ask pardon humbly on their knees, of God, and of His holy angels, for the tyranny and insolence of those whom they at present represent, towards an angelic spirit; in order that, being thus admonished, they may learn justice, and not again to contemn god-like men, the heroes of the earth, and its salt.

I repeat modestly what I have often heard from

the lips of hero-worshippers; neither then, nor now presuming to affirm, or to deny, the correctness of their conclusions, because I am myself, in some slight degree, interested and implicated in the matters in question; and that a man should be judge in his own cause is never expedient.

CHAPTER X.

I HAD been invited to spend the Easter Vacation at Field Place. I have been reminded very lately of a trifling circumstance, which I had entirely forgotten, but of which I instantly became reminiscent. In accepting the invitation three or four months before the time to which it related, I had expressed a doubt whether it was prudent to look so far into the future: this pretended scruple caused much amusement in the family, and seemed extremely grotesque and ludicrous; so much so that it was always borne in mind. Events proved painfully that my doubt was but too well founded, although I felt no reason at the time for doubting; and without intending to prophesy, I was a true prophet.

It is possible that the Muses may not be less prone to tittle-tattle than other mature virgins, for there is gossip even in an University. I found amongst my father's papers a gossiping letter, "a foolish performance" enough; but, as it is a

contemporary narrative of "the late occurrence at. University College," I will extract a portion of it; it is partly true, and partly false, as such narratives usually are.

There was no desire to be singular, or even to be dual, for two singulars would make a dual. The two young men associated chiefly with each other, but they kept company with others also; but little, in truth, with men of their own college, because their society was not congenial. They often took long walks together into the country, a recreation which was highly approved of; the lectures and other duties detained them until one or two, the public dinner was at four; there was no obligation to dine in hall, and it is obvious, that it was impossible to walk for five or six hours without giving up the college dinner. Shelley was always dressed like a gentleman, handsomely indeed; but there was something of singularity in his appearance, it must be admitted. His throat was often bare, the collar of his shirt open, in days when a huge neckcloth was the mode; other men's heads, like those of private soldiers, were then clipped quite close, the poet's locks were long, which certainly was a singular phenomenon, and streaming like a meteor; and the air of his little round hat upon his little round head was troubled and peculiar.

We are charged with seeming to say, "We are superior to everybody!" I acknowledge the truth of the charge, I accept the challenge; and I now say boldly, confidently, and without fear of contradiction, of my incomparable friend, "He was superior to everybody!"

I found also a letter, of which I knew nothing, and which I had never seen before, from Shelley to my father, amongst his papers, after the death of my father and of Shelley. It has no date, but was written in the trellised room, with the kindest and most honourable feelings, and plainly under strong emotion, being confused and inaccurate, a thing unusual, and almost unprecedented with my true yoke-fellow.

I do not believe, that Mr. T. Shelley ever let fall the expressions which were imputed to him. It is my duty to speak the truth, the whole truth, and therefore I cannot but confess that the poor fellow had many underhand ways; these I found out, sometimes long subsequent to the event. I discovered them casually after an absence from him, and more particularly after his last long sad absence; but the obligation to tell the whole truth requires, that I should add, that his underhand ways differed in one very important respect from those of other people. The latter were concealed, because they were mean, selfish, sordid, too bad, in

one word, to be told; his secrets, on the contrary, were hidden through modesty, delicacy, generosity, refinement of soul, through a dislike to be praised and thanked for noble, disinterested, high-minded deeds, for incredible liberality and self-sacrifice.

I did not know of the existence of his letter to my father until I found it, when he was no more, after the hand, that wrote it, had been rapidly reduced to ashes in a funeral fire, kindled on the coast of Italy in obedience to the strict laws and regulations of quarantine.

Of these tragic scenes I must discourse at length hereafter, painful as the task will be; for the present it suffices to say that, like every other memorial of the Divine Poet, which I possess, and in due season will freely produce, it reminded me forcibly, yet needlessly, of the greatness of my loss. What answer was returned to the letter does not appear, and can never appear; without doubt, a courteous and a becoming one.

6th April, 1811.

B. J. came to me this morning from Oxford. I have had the whole history from him; and the reason of all this strange conduct in your son and Shelley is what I supposed, a desire to be singular. There is no striking impiety in the pamphlet; but it goes to show, that, because a supreme power

cannot be seen, such power may be doubted to exist. It is a foolish performance, so far as argument goes; but written in good language. These two young men gave up associating with any body else some months since; never dined in College; dressed differently from all others, and did everything in their power to show singularity, as much as to say, "We are superior to everybody." They have been writing Novels. Shelley has published his, and your son has not. Shelley is son to the Member for Shoreham. He has always been odd, I find, and suspected of insanity, but of great acquirements; so is your son; I mean, as to the latter, he is of high repute in College.

C. R.

To J. H., Norton.

15, Poland Street.

Sir,

I accompanied (at his desire) Mr. Jefferson Hogg to Mr. C., who was intrusted with certain propositions to be offered to my friend. I was there extremely surprised; no less hurt than surprised, to find, my father in his interview with Mr. C. had, either unadvisedly or intentionally, let fall expressions, which conveyed an idea, that Mr. J. H. was the "original corruptor" of my principles. That on this subject (notwithstanding his long

experience) Mr. T. Shelley must know less than his son, will be conceded; and I feel it but justice, in consequence of your feelings, so natural, what Mr. C. communicated, positively to deny the assertion; I feel this tribute, which I have paid to the just sense of horror you entertain, to be due to you, as a gentleman. I hope, my motives stand excused to your candour.

Myself and my friend have offered concessions; painful, indeed, they are to myself, but such as on mature consideration we find due to our high sense of filial duty.

Permit me to request your indulgence for the liberty I have taken in thus addressing you.

I remain your obedient humble servant,

P. B. SHELLEY.

To John Hogg, Esq.

February, 1857.

DEAR H.

You know he was fond of chemistry, and in one of his experiments he set fire to the butler, Laker, and then soused him with a pail of cold water. On another occasion, in the spring of 1811, he went with C. to the British Forum, in the vicinity of Covent Garden. It was then a spouting club, in which Gale Jones and other Radicals abused all existing governments. Bysshe made so good a speech, complimenting and differing from

the previous orators, that when he left the room, there was a rush to find out who he was, and to induce him to attend there again. He gave them a false name and address, not caring a farthing about the meeting, or the subjects there discussed. C. may know some anecdotes about him; he was more with him than I was, as at that time I was engaged in professional pursuits.

I am sorry for the loss of all Bysshe's letters, which, with others, were destroyed when I left London for Edinburgh. I never saw him after his second marriage.

I remain your affectionate cousin,

J. G.

To H. S.

Dear J.

This chemical anecdote may, I think, be placed with my recollections on the same subject. I forget whether I mentioned the dreadful state he was in by careless manipulation of combustibles; his hands and face being burned and blackened by some badly managed experiment, either at Eton or Oxford. He had caustic to play with, I fancy, for our white frocks used, in a mysterious manner, to be found stained with black marks, pronounced by the learned lunar caustic; and we poor little ignoramuses were accused of knowing how it came there; and I can feel now my stupid, childish silence, and wonder at

the irremoveable stain. Now I can imagine, our frequent visits to the Hall Chamber, Bysshe's room, were the certain means of getting marked. H. S.

We had lived together in London nearly a month, and notwithstanding occasional interruptions by disturbing forces, on the whole very happily; we were now to part, but only, it was believed, for a short time: in less than a month our pleasant student life was to recommence at York, and to be continued there as agreeably as ever, without let or hindrance, for a year. At the expiration of the year it was to be calmly enjoyed in London for an indefinite period, during the remainder of our lives. So was it that man proposed—of the actual disposition, hereafter.

I quitted Shelley with mutual regret, leaving him alone in the trellised chamber, where he was to remain, a bright-eyed, restless fox amidst sour grapes, not, as his poetic imagination at first suggested, for ever, but a little while longer. I left London at nine o'clock in the evening by the Holyhead mail, having dined with the grave companion of my journey at a coffee-house in Bond Street. In the morning we found ourselves at Birmingham, and breakfasted at the Hen and Chickens, which at that time was one of the worst and dirtiest of the many bad and dirty inns which make the recollec-

tions of former days too often bitter. The third person at breakfast was an outside passenger, an Irishman, who informed us, that on a former occasion, when he was at Birmingham, he happened to be short of money, the rents of his estates not having been duly remitted to him, so that he was obliged to raise a sum on his watch, a gold watch, which he produced. My cautious companion began to look rather alarmed at this opening, as if he feared our new friend from the outside was about to require of him a loan on the security of the gold watch. He answered him shortly, but the narration was not to be broken off so easily: "Accordingly, I asked the waiter at this hotel to recommend a respectable pawnbroker to me; he did so. I went to his shop, and was treated very handsomely; he at once advanced on the watch, without any difficulty, more than I had expected; and, indeed, I found him to be a liberal, intelligent, and high-minded man, and a most perfect gentleman. I have recommended him to many of my friends, and as you, sir, may probably have occasion to raise money in that way, I will point out his shop to you before you quit Birmingham, if you will give me leave." My companion, a prudent, precise, scrupulous, exact, and thriving man, shrunk back at the proposal. He felt that it was just as probable that he should murder the landlord, rob the inn, and then

set fire to the filthy Hen and Chickens, as that he should ever be under the necessity of pledging his watch.

"No! no! sir, I thank you, it is unnecessary; that is quite out of my way; pray, do not trouble yourself!"

"It is no trouble at all; you can see the shop from the door of the inn. You may not want money yourself, but some of your friends very likely will."

The more the Irishman pressed, the more my companion held back: the former seemed quite uneasy that his obliging offer was declined; so to soothe his wounded feelings, I interposed: "If the place can be seen from the door of the inn, you may show it to me; that will do as well." I went to the door with him, and he pointed out a pawnbroker's shop, and begged me to remember the situation and the name: I promised to remember them.

We had remained in Birmingham already longer than it is usual for a mail coach to remain, and we suddenly resumed our seats at the sound of the horn. My companion, as I fancied, seemed unhappy, when I went out of the room with the Irishman. To relieve his mind, I said, "As the man was getting so uneasy, to comfort him I just allowed him to show me the shop."

"Yes, it was very good-natured of you! That was characteristic; was it not? altogether Irish!

For my part, I never like to trust myself alone with an Irishman; I am always afraid lest the fellow should take it into his head to cut my throat!"

When we were changing horses, the son of Erin came to the window, "Do you recollect the shop and the name? Are you sure? I can give you the address!"

"Thank you; I recollect them!"

He disappeared, we saw no more of him, and my cautious companion seemed to be relieved.

We left the mail, or rather the mail left us behind at Shrewsbury. We ordered a post-chaise and chops, and went forth to take a look at the picturesque old town, and the beautiful river Severn, which were new to me, and then returned to our inn. We dined in the same room with a venerable old clergyman, and a pretty young female who had a baby in her arms. They were taking tea.

"Wife, or daughter?" We mooted the question, as we were jolted along to Ellesmere. I opined that she was his wife.

"No," said my companion indignantly, although an old man himself. "That is impossible; that old fellow can never have such a pretty young wife!"

"Not impossible, by any means; only he is a very fortunate old fellow, if he really has so young,—so charming a wife!"

The discussion became animated, my companion

let down the front window, and asked the post-boy, who they were. A post-boy knows nothing beyond his horses' heads; he could not tell us.

"The next time I go to Shrewsbury, I will ask the landlady; she will inform me."

I never heard what the decision was, and therefore it is not improbable that it was in my favour; that she was his wife. Oh! happy divine! A divine for a husband, and a divine wife!

The Wrekin was pointed out to me, and some other remarkable objects by the way; and after a rough ride we arrived at Ellesmere. It is a sweet spot, in a pleasant country, seated on the margin of a pretty mere, or lake, of clear water. We had a most delightful supper; it was called a Welsh rabbit, and was said to be the true genuine and native form of that engaging little creature. There was bright, pale amber ale, sweetened with loaf sugar, and flavoured with nutmeg, in a large silver bowl; slices of toasted bread floated in this nectar. Some excellent toasted cheese was brought in, smoking, hissing hot. A slice of toast was transferred from the bowl to the plate, and the melted cheese was spread upon it; the golden liquor was ladled out into glasses. Thus we supped, not only on the first evening, but on every other during my stay at Ellesmere. I never fed on nectar and ambrosia before, and I regret to add that I have never partaken of the banquets of

the immortal gods since. No substance, solid or fluid, differs so much in quality as the ale or beer in various parts of England. In the northern counties it is peculiarly detestable. If it were clear, which it never is there, it would be a liquor as generous as the water that drains from a peat-bog. It must be a guilty land indeed, which the angry gods have visited with the tremendous visitation of bad beer! I found at Ellesmere a young college friend; he was visiting, during the Easter vacation, in the same bachelor's house as myself; we walked, or rode on horseback, all the morning, about this singularly pleasant land, and after dinner we rowed a handsome barge, with some assistance, round the pretty mere, and across its still, pellucid waters; our exploits in this line were long remembered; the tradition of them came to my ears many years after. We visited several of the neighbouring squires, and partook of their free hospitality, tasting that fine old port wine, which is not the least striking of the many romantic beauties of North Wales. Their society was not the less agreeable and amusing, because it was somewhat peculiar and characteristic; the conversation, for example, would often become eminently Celtic after dinner, particularly when the excellent port began to operate, and the warm Cambrian blood had grown still warmer. They then talked of their quarrels; of horsewhipping and knocking down; of

breaking the neck, beating out the brains, and cutting out a rascal's liver. The weather was charming. I was always in the open air; for reading there was little leisure: the tales of La Fontaine, two or three of the minor works of Xenophon, as his discourse on Hunting; and a cursory survey of a newspaper, comprehended my course of study in the county of Salop. We made several agreeable excursions. Of these, the chief was our expedition to Llangollen. I first entered the Principality in a post-chaise; we came upon the wonderful bridge of junction, Pont Cysylte, and we walked across it, along the towing-path of the canal, of which the bridge is the aqueduct, and then into the tunnel at the farther end, by the same path. On our return, we descended to the lovely river Dee, which the lofty bridge so proudly bestrides. On the banks of the river, a great crowd of country people was assembled to witness the rites of a congregation of Anabaptists. We joined them just in time to see an old man in a loose flannel gown seize an old woman, dressed in the same manner, by the arm, and wade with her into the middle of the stream, which reached up to their waists. She then gave him her hands, and throwing herself backwards, baptism by total immersion was achieved by the old minister, precisely as bathing in the sea is effected by old bathing women. Some prayers,

doubtless, were repeated, but we could not hear them. Whilst the dripping pair came slowly out of the river, the bystanders sang hymns in Welsh, and their loud cry filled the valley. We ordered dinner at Llangollen, and walked to Valle Crucis, a sweet religious seclusion, and to some other very striking points of view. Our exercise during the morning, and the glad sound of the Welsh harp during dinner, made a poor meal less unpalatable. After dinner, we visited the residence of the two lady-friends, Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Ponsonby, whose strong mutual attachment was esteemed still more remarkable and romantic than their abode.

The church was open, and we entered it. We had assisted at the ceremony of adult baptism before; we now were witnesses of infant baptism. The tones of the Welsh language were solemn and sonorous, and the water — by means of which the young soldier of Christ was to be initiated—was not the noble stream of Dee, but only so much of the saving fluid as a broken pie-dish, standing in the font, could contain. The broken pie-dish amused us greatly, not because it was a vessel of dishonour, ill-suited for a staid occasion, but as being a symbol.

Our kind host was familiar with Wales, with its usages—warlike and convivial: he said to us, when our chaise entered the Principality in the morning, "Now, keep a sharp look-out, young gen-

tlemen, and see if you can find a whole man. I never could!"

He informed us that whenever a Welshman goes to market, to a fair, or indeed from home, on any mission, he has a drink, and, if possible, a fight also. If the latter cannot be had, he remains drinking until he is quite drunk and it is quite dark, and then, returning homewards, by steep, rugged, and devious paths, he falls down — up, over, or into some perilous place, and so sustains as much damage as he could have found in battle. We looked out, as we were directed, both in going and in returning: one man had his arm in a sling, another walked with a crutch; on this eye there was a patch; that head was bound up; something or other had been mended, and was still out of repair, —in every male on the road. The women were quite sound, in their blue cloth jackets and round black felt hats,—they seemed brisk and entire; but their mates were all fractured, more or less. The broken pie-dish in the font, therefore, was an emblem, a type, a pledge, that the young Christian would always fight manfully, although not always perhaps under those banners to which his fidelity had been promised.

The Welsh rabbit, our usual supper, was still dearer to us than ever, after the greasy, blackened chops and tough steaks of Llangollen.

Whilst I, like a mere matter-of-fact man, was taking the world easily, and prosaically enjoying life, as it came, my poor absent friend, as his letters too plainly testify, was paying the penalty of his poetic temperament, and suffering severely from the cruel aches and pains of imagination.

POLAND STREET, *April* 18, 1811.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Certainly this place is a little solitary, but as a person cannot be quite alone when he has even got himself with him, I get on pretty well. I have employed myself in writing poetry, and as I go to bed at eight o'clock, time passes quicker than it otherwise might.

Yesterday I had a letter from Whitton to invite me to his house; of course, the answer was negative. I wrote to say, that I would resign all claim to the entail, if he would allow me two hundred pounds a-year, and divide the rest among my sisters. Of course he will not refuse the offer. You remarked that, in Lord Mount Edgecombe's hermitage, I should have nothing to talk of but myself; nor have I anything here, except I should transcribe the *jeux-d'esprit* of the maid.

Mr. Pilfold has written a very civil letter; my mother intercepted that—sent to my father, and

wrote to me to come, inclosing the money. I, of course, returned it.

Miss Westbrook has this moment called on me, with her sister. It certainly was very kind of her. Adieu!

The post goes.

Yours,

P. B. S.

To T. J. H., Ellesmere.

LONDON, *April* 24, 1811.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You have, with wonderful sagacity, no doubt, refuted an argument of mine, the very existence of which I had forgotten. Something singularly conceited, no doubt, by the remarks you make on it. Fine flowery language, you say; well, I cannot help it; you see me in my weakest moments. All I can tell you of it is, that I certainly was not laughing, as you conjecture. This circumstance may go against me. I do not know that it will, however, as I have by no means a *precise* idea of what the subject of this composition was.

"The Galilean is not a favourite of mine," a French author writes. The French write audaciously—rashly. "So far from owing him any thanks for his favours, I cannot avoid confessing that I owe a secret grudge to his carpentership—*charpen-*

terie. The reflecting part of the community—that part in whose happiness we philosophers have so strong an interest — certainly do not require his morality, which, where there is no *vice*, fetters *virtue*: Here we all agree. Let this horrid Galilean rule the *Canaille* then! I give them up." And I give them up; I will no more mix politics and virtue, they are incompatible.

My little friend Harriet W. is gone to her prison-house. She is quite well in health; at least so she says, though she looks very much otherwise. I saw her yesterday. I went with her sister to Miss H.'s, and walked about Clapham Common with them for two hours. The youngest is a most amiable girl; the eldest is really conceited, but very condescending. I took the sacrament with her on Sunday. You say I talk philosophically of her kindness in calling on me. She is very charitable and good. I shall always think of it with gratitude, because I certainly did not deserve it, and she exposed herself to much possible odium. It is perhaps scarcely doing her a kindness —it is perhaps inducing positive unhappiness—to point out to her a road which leads to perfection, the attainment of which, perhaps, does not repay the difficulties of the progress. What do you think of this? If trains of thought, development of mental energies influence in any degree a future state; if this is *even* possible—if it stands on *at all* securer

ground than mere hypothesis; then is it not a service? Where am I gotten? perhaps into another ridiculous argument. I will not proceed, for I shall forget all I have said, and cannot, in justice, animadvert upon any of your critiques.

I called on John Grove this morning. I met my father in the passage, and politely inquired after his health. He looked as black as a thunder-cloud, and said, "Your most humble servant!" I made him a low bow, and wishing him a very good morning,—passed on. He is very irate about my proposals. I cannot resign anything till I am twenty-one. I cannot do anything, therefore I have three more years to consider of the matter you mentioned. I shall go down to Field Place soon. I wait for Mr. Pilfold's arrival, with whom I shall depart. He is resolved (the old fellow) that I shall not stay at Field Place. If I please—as I shall do for some time—I *will*. This resolution of mine was hinted to him: "Oh! then I shall take his sister away before he comes." But I shall follow her, as her retirement cannot be a secret. This will probably lead me to wander about for some time. You will hear from me, however, wherever I am. If all these things are useless, you will see me at York, or at Ellesmere, if you still remain there. The scenery excites mournful ideas. I am sorry to hear it; I hoped that it would have had a contrary effect. May I indulge the idea that

York is as stupid as Oxford. And yet you did not wander alone amid the mountains? I think I shall live at the foot of Snowdon. Suppose we both go there directly? Do not be surprised if you see me at Ellesmere. Yes, you would, for it would be a strange thing. I am now nearly recovered. Strange that Florian could not see the conclusions from his own reasoning. How can the hope of a higher reward stimulating an action make it virtuous, if the essence of virtue is disinterested, as all, who know anything of virtue, must allow, as *he* does allow. How inconsistent is this religion! How apt to pervert the judgment, and finally the heart of the most amiably-intentioned who confide in it! I wish I was with you in the mountains; could not we live there?

Direct to 15, Poland Street. I write to-morrow to York.

Your affectionate friend,

P. B. S.

Your B—— is worse than stupid; he is provoking. Have you really no one to associate with—not even a peasant, a child of nature, a spider? And this from the hermit, the philosopher? Oh, you are right to laugh at me. I finished the little poem, one stanza of which you said was pretty; it is, on the whole, a most stupid thing, as you will confess, when

I some day inflict a perusal of it on your innocent ears. Yet I have nothing to amuse myself with, and if it does not injure others and you cannot avoid it, I do not see much harm in being mad.

You even vindicate it in some almost inspired stanzas, which I found among my transcriptions to-day.

Adieu! I am going to Miss W.'s to dinner. Her father is out. I will write to-morrow.

To T. J. H., Ellesmere.

Lincoln's Inn Fields, *April* 28, 1811.

I am now at Grove's. I don't know where I am, where I will be. Future, present, past, is all a mist; it seems as if I had begun existence anew, under auspices so unfavourable. Yet no! That is stupid! My poor little friend has been ill, her sister sent for me the other night. I found her on a couch pale; her father is civil to me, very strangely; the sister is too civil by half. She began talking about *l'Amour*. I philosophised, and the youngest said, she had such a headache, that she could not bear conversation. Her sister then went away, and I stayed till half-past twelve. Her father had a large party below, he invited me; I refused. Yes! The fiend, the wretch, shall fall! Harriet will do for one of the crushers, and the eldest (Emily), with some taming, will do, too.

They are both very clever, and the youngest (my friend) is amiable. Yesterday she was better, to-day her father compelled her to go to Clapham, whither I have conducted her, and I am now returned. Why is it, that the moment we two are separated, I can scarcely set bounds to my hatred of intolerance; is it feeling? is it passion? I would willingly persuade myself that it is neither; willingly would I persuade myself that all that is amiable, all that is good, falls by its prevalence, and that *I* ought unceasingly to attempt its destruction. Yet, you say that millions of bad are necessary for the existence of a few pre-eminent in excellence. Is not this a despotism of virtue, which is inconsistent with its nature? Is it not the Asiatic tyrant, who renders his territory wretched to fill his seraglio? the shark, who must glut his maw with millions of fish, in order that he may exist? I have often said, that I doubted your divinities, and if this inference follows the established hypothesis of their existence, I do not merely doubt, but hope that my doubts are founded on truth.

I think, then, that the *term* "superior" is bad, as it involves this horrible consequence. Let the word "perfect," then, be offered as a substitute; to which each who aspires, may indulge a hope of arriving; or rather every one (speaking of *men*) may hope to contribute to woman's arrival, which, in

fact, is themselves advancing; although, like the shadow preceding the figure, or the spiral, it always may advance, and never touch.

My sister does not come to town, nor will she ever, at least I can see no chance of it. I will not deceive myself; she is lost, lost to everything; Intolerance has tainted her,—she talks cant and twaddle. I would not venture thus to prophesy without being most perfectly convinced in my own mind of the truth of what I say. It *may* not be irretrievable; but, yes, it is! A young female, who only once, only for a short time, asserted her claim to an unfettered use of reason, bred up with bigots, having before her eyes examples of the consequences of scepticism, or even of philosophy, which she must now see to lead directly to the former. A mother, who is mild and tolerant, yet narrow-minded; how, I ask, is *she* to be rescued from its influence?

I tell you, my dear friend, openly the feelings of my mind, the state of its convictions on every subject; this, then, is one, and I do not expect that you will say, "It must be so painful to your feelings, that I hope you will never again mention it." I do not expect you to say, "I had rather you were under a pleasing error; it is not a friendly act to dissipate the mists, which hide a frightful prospect." On other subjects you have soared above prejudices,

you have investigated them, terrible as they may have appeared, and resolved to abide by the result of that investigation. And you *have* abided by it. Why then should there yet remain a subject on which you profess yourself fearful to inquire? I will not allow you to say incompetent. Error cannot in any of its shapes be good, I cannot conceive the possibility.

You talk of the credulity of mankind, its proneness to superstition, that it ever has been a slave to the vilest of errors. Is your inference necessary, or direct, that it ever will continue so? You say that "I have no idea how society could be freed from false notions on almost every subject." No; nor would the first man in the world, supposing that there ever was one, at the moment of his arriving to his estate, have any conception how a fertile piece of land would look without weeds; he stares at it, and thinks it is least of all fitted for his conveniences, when a stricter searching into its nature would convince him, that it was calculated to contribute to them with a sufficient proportion of labour, more than the barer land, which appeared clear.

Dares the lama, most fleet of the sons of the wind,
The lion to rouse from his skull-covered lair?
When the tiger approaches can the fast-fleeting hind
Repose trust in his footsteps of air?
No? Abandon'd he sinks in a trance of despair,
The monster transfixes his prey,
On the sand flows his life-blood away;

Whilst India's rocks to his death-yells reply,
Protracting the horrible harmony.

Yet the fowl of the desert, when danger encroaches,
Dares fearless to perish defending her brood,
Though the fiercest of cloud-piercing tyrants approaches,
Thirsting—aye, thirsting for blood;
And demands, like mankind, his brother for food;
Yet more lenient, more gentle than they;
For hunger, not glory, the prey
Must perish. Revenge does not howl in the dead,
Nor ambition with fame crown the murderer's head.

Though weak, as the lama, that bounds on the mountains,
And endued not with fast-fleeting footsteps of air,
Yet, yet will I draw from the purest of fountains,
Though a fiercer than tiger is there.
Though more dreadful than death, it scatters despair,
Though its shadow eclipses the day,
And the darkness of deepest dismay
Spreads the influence of soul-chilling terror around,
And lowers on the corpses, that rot on the ground.

They came to the fountain to draw from its stream,
Waves too pure, too celestial, for mortals to see;
They bathed for a while in its silvery beam,
Then perish'd, and perish'd like me.
For in vain from the grasp of the Bigot I flee;
The most tenderly loved of my soul
Are slaves to his hated control.
He pursues me, he blasts me! 'Tis in vain that I fly:
What remains, but to curse him,—to curse him and die?

There it is—a mad effusion of this morning! I had resolved not to mortgage before you left London; I told you, that I should divide it with my sisters, and leave everything else to fate.

Your affectionate friend,

P. B. S.

To T. J. H., Ellesmere.

CHAPTER XI.

THE pleasant passages in this life come to an end, as well as its painful incidents, with this difference, however, that the former always seem to terminate more speedily. My young college friend had returned to Oxford, my older and original companion and myself were to travel together to York. We reached Chester, if I remember rightly, in a post-chaise. Some twenty years later I had occasion to become very familiar with that venerable city, and, from the peculiar circumstances of my position, with its decayed and dilapidated, but ancient and remarkable institutions also; but this was my first visit to the renowned Roman camp and city of West Chester. I was surprised by its Rows, its gates, and walls, delighted with its beautiful site and noble river; and the walk round its walls, which I have enjoyed many times since before breakfast,—has left a recollection so charming that I would gladly lay down my pen, and go forth, and make the pleasant circuit at once, and once more.

The journey from one Roman city to the other—from Chester to York—was tedious and abominable; a slow, heavy, uneasy coach, rough roads, steep interminable hills, and filthy inns, and barbarous and disgusting fellow-travellers. The inhabitants of the borders of Yorkshire and Lancashire entertain mutually an intense dislike for each other, and in this dislike, certainly, both parties are fully justified.

The Yorkshireman has a profound contempt for the understanding of the Lancastrian, he accounts him a simpleton—a poor fool, and calls him such. The Lancashireman views his neighbour precisely in the same light, and treats him in the same manner. Whilst each utterly despises the other, each has a most exaggerated opinion of his own acuteness, and this he is perpetually endeavouring to demonstrate by overreaching him in a bargain. As soon as the rivals meet, one of them instantly proposes an exchange—a swap, is their phrase—to barter watches, knives, handkerchiefs, hats; article against article of the same or of a different description, of equal value, or with a balance to be adjusted by money. This traffic was kept up whilst we were on the frontiers, and indeed during the greater part of our journey. It was carried on invariably in a loud, angry voice, in an uncouth dialect, with contemptuous menacing gestures, and sometimes an inside

passenger bawling out through the window, or standing up with his head thrust out, would haggle in rude clamorous wrath with some brother Vandal on the top of the coach, touching an exchange of waistcoats.

I had never assisted at a swap before, or fallen in with these borderers; the trafficking savages seemed to be the most odious of mankind. I have since learned that the savage is still more offensive when he is half-civilised, when he has grown into a Manchesterman, a cotton lord; and more especially when he is unhappily in a position to swap, as a mischievous minister, on an extensive scale, basely and perniciously.

To see Leeds again, it is said, is to like it less than before. I had already seen that town more than once, and I have seen it since so often, that I can revisit it now without any increased aversion. We passed a night very uncomfortably, of course, at Leeds, and the next morning—I believe it was Sunday—a two-horse coach took us to York,—to York, with which city I was then tolerably well acquainted, and with which I have since had so many opportunities to become perfectly familiar: and here the race-horse was at once put into the dung-cart. I was introduced the same day to the conveyancer, at whose chambers my professional studies were to commence. He was a worthy, good-natured,

friendly man—a right good fellow, indeed; a provincial barrister with a fair share of business, and sufficiently well acquainted with the routine of practice. This was all; the learned gentleman had as much of human learning as his horse,—just as much erudition as his saddle, and his attainments were graced by a Yorkshire dialect so excessively broad, that if Oxberry had spoken so broadly on the stage, he would have been censured for gross exaggeration; no Yorkshire tike, it would have been affirmed, ever spoke such a lingo. Some feeble—very feeble—and impotent attempts have been lately made to remedy and correct the ignorance and vulgarity by which a liberal profession is oppressed and weighed down, or rather the pretence and affectation of reform are kept up; a false pretence to supply a genuine article, but in reality to substitute and palm upon the public a counterfeit,—a base counterfeit, and as such pledged to uphold the vested and sacred interests of imposture. But of these matters hereafter.

York was the residence of many genteel families of competent fortunes, and much hospitality was exercised there. It was hardly possible to dine out without meeting the great diner-out of the district, and without observing his more than clerical enjoyment of a good dinner; for if he was less than a parson in some respects, he was more than one in a very essential particular, the love of eating and drinking.

His hearty, cordial, genial laugh was of itself exhilarating, and his incessant joking of jokes passed off very well in a provincial city; in society of a higher description it was often in the way, and one soon grew weary of the noisy, impudent, shallow, clerical jester, Sidney Smith. Alone engrossing the whole of the conversation, he must have all the talk to himself, speaking always of little else than himself. He shot out cart-loads of rubbish with an overpowering din, sometimes producing a good thing, no doubt, which a man of moderate parts can hardly fail to do, who boldly brings out whatever comes uppermost, with very little regard for his own dignity, and none for the feelings of others. There was, moreover, something cowardly in his facetiousness, his buffoonery; he ran the rig mercilessly upon the weak and helpless, carefully avoiding all contact with every person who might prove to be his match, or more than his match.

I walked one Sunday morning to a village a few miles from York, of which he had the living, to hear him preach, soon after I came to reside there, and before I had seen him; for he was already a person of some notoriety; he had been a popular preacher in London, and he had taken part in the controversy between the University of Oxford and the Edinburgh Review. The church was mean

and small, and small was the congregation; it was composed of a few farmers, their families and servants, and labourers in husbandry. His voice would have filled a cathedral, his appearance was adapted to be seen from a distance; there was nothing remarkable or valuable in his discourse. I cannot believe that he could have written a good sermon; the matter was not in him. He might have borrowed the composition of some eminent divine, it is true, and his delivery would have been distinct and agreeable, but not effective. He could never have appeared sufficiently in earnest; he wanted that deep, moving, Christian earnestness which is indispensable for edification. There was a certain pulpit display, which his hearers admired and praised, but nothing more.

I met Sidney Smith afterwards at intervals, for evidently disliking his own cloth, he affected the society of lawyers. I compared him in my own mind with old Sam Parr. They both toiled unceasingly, and laboured hard and very successfully to demonstrate to all the world, how utterly unfit they were to be what each of them so vehemently strove to be, a bishop. The one rendered learning, the other wit, contemptible and ridiculous.

15, Poland Street, *April* 26, 1811.

My dear Friend,

I indulge despair. *Why* do I so? I will

not philosophise; it is, perhaps, a poor way of administering comfort to myself to say, that I *ought* not to be in need of it. I fear the despair which springs from disappointed love, is a passion,—a passion, too, which is least of all reducible to reason. But it is a passion, it is independent of volition; it is the necessary effect of a cause, which *must*, I feel, continue to operate. Wherefore, then, do you ask, *Why* I indulge despair? And what shall I tell you, which can make you happier, which can alleviate even solitude and regret. Shall I tell you the truth? Oh, you are too well aware of that, or you would not talk of despair. Shall I say that the time may come when happiness shall dawn upon a night of wretchedness? Why should I be a false prophet, if I said this? I do not know, except on the general principle, that the evils in this world powerfully overbalance its pleasures; how, then, could I be justified in saying this? You will tell me to cease to think, to cease to feel; you will tell me to be anything but what I am; and I fear I must obey the command before I can talk of hope.

I find there can be bigots in philosophy as well as in religion; I, perhaps, may be classed with the former. I *have* read your letter attentively. Yet *all* religionists *do* judge of philosophers in the way which you reprehend; *faith* is one of the highest moral virtues,—the foundation, indeed, upon which

all others must rest; and religionists think, that he who has neglected to *cultivate* this, has not performed *one-third* of the moral duties, as Bishop Warburton dogmatically asserts. The religionists, then, by this very *Faith*, without which they could not be religionists, think the most virtuous philosopher must have neglected one-third of the moral duties.

If, then, a religionist, the *most* amiable of them, regards the best philosopher as *far* from being virtuous, has not a philosopher reason to suspect the amiability of a system, which inculcates so glaringly uncharitable opinions? Can a being, amiable to a high degree, possessed, of course, of judgment, without which amiability would be in a poor way, hold such opinions as these? Supposing even, they were supported by reason, they ought to be suspected as leading to a conclusion *ad absurdum*; since, however, they combine irrationality and absurdity with effects on the mind most opposite to retiring amiability, are they not to be *more* than suspected? Take any system of religion, lop off all the disgusting excrescences, or rather adjuncts, retain virtuous precepts, qualify selfish dogmas (I would even allow as much irrationality as amiability could swallow, but uncombined with immorality and self-conceitedness); do all this, and *I* will say, it is a system which *can* do no

harm, and, indeed, is highly requisite for the vulgar. But perhaps it is best for the latter that they should have it as their fathers gave it them; that the amiable, the inquiring should reject it altogether.

Yet I will allow that it *may* be consistent with amiability, when amiability does not know the deformity of the wretched errors, and that they *really* are as we behold them. I cannot judge of a system by the flowers which are scattered here and there; you omit the mention of the *weeds*, which grow so high that few botanists can see the flowers; and those who *do* gather the latter are frequently, I fear, tainted with the pestilential vapour of the former.

The argument of *supremacy* is really amiable, without that I should give up the remotest *possibility* of success. Yet that applies but to the existence of a *Creator*, that is inconsequential: the inquirer here, the amiable inquirer, does not pause at the world, lest *she* should be left supreme; she advances *one* step higher, not being aware, or not caring to be aware, of the infinity of the staircase which she ascends. This is *irrational*, but it is not unamiable,—it does not involve the hateful consequences of selfishness, self-conceitedness, and the subserviency of faith to the volition of the believer, which are necessary to the existence of "a spurious system of theology."

A *religionist*, I will allow, may be more amiable than a philosopher, although in one instance reason is allowed to sleep, that amiability may watch. Yet, my dear friend, this is not Intolerance, nor can that odious system stand excused on this ground, as its very principle revolts against the dear modesty which suggests a dereliction of reason in the other instance. I again assert,—nor, perhaps, are you prepared to deny, much as your amiable motive might prompt you to wish it,—that religion is too often the child of cold prejudice and selfish fear. Love of a Deity, of Allah, Bramah (it is all the same), certainly springs from the latter motive; is this *love?* You know too well, it is not. Here I appeal to your own heart, your own feelings. At that tribunal I feel that I am secure. I once could almost *tolerate* intolerance,—it then merely injured me once; it merely deprived *me* of all that I cared for, touching myself, on earth; but now it has done more, and I cannot forgive.

Eloisa said, "I have hated myself, that I might love thee, Abelard." When I hear a religionist prepared to say so, as her sincere sentiments, I then will allow that in a *few* instances the virtue of religion is separable from the vice.

She is *not* lost for ever! How I hope that may be true; but I fear *I* can never ascertain, I can never influence an amelioration, as she does not

any longer permit a "*philosopher*" to correspond with her. She talks of duty to her *Father*. And this is your amiable religion!

You will excuse my raving, my dear friend; you will not be severe upon my hatred of a cause which can produce such an effect as this. You talk of the dead; do we not exist after the tomb? It is a natural question, my friend, when there is nothing in life: yet it is one on which you have never told me any *solid* grounds for your opinions.

You shall hear from me again soon. I send some verses. I heard from F. yesterday. All that he said was: My letters are arrived.—G. S. F.

My dear friend, your affectionate

P. B. SHELLEY.

To T. J. H., Post Office, York.

15, POLAND STREET, *April* 29, 1811.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Father is as fierce as a lion, again. The other day he was in town. John Grove saw him and succeeded in flattering him into a promise, that he would allow me £200 per annum, and leave me alone.

The *Misery;* for now he has left town, and written to disannul all that he before promised. *Gelidum*

Nemus is flattering like a courtier, and will, I conjecture, bring him about again. He wants me to go to Oxford to apologise to the Master, &c. No, of course!

I suppose you are now at York. I wish I could come and join you, particularly as I fear you think too much on subjects which are better for oblivion than memory.

Write something—will you make a novel?—engage in some pursuit which can interest you. I wish you would allow me to be your Dr. Willis. I would not, as I threatened in the Piazza, confine you in a dark room—no, I would advise a regimen the very opposite to that which I then recommended. You say the scenery of Wales is *too* beautiful. Yet, why not allow that to interest you? why not cultivate the taste for poetry, which it is useless to deny that you possess?

Indeed, I wish to come to York. I shall as soon as I can, not that I mean the strain detains me, as I am nearly well, but I want to settle pecuniary matters. I am quite well off in that now. Remember it is idle to talk of money between us, and little as it may do for polities, with us, you must allow that possession of bullion, chattels, &c., is common. Tell me, then, if you want cash, as I have nearly drained you, and all delicacy, like sisters stripping before each other, is out of the question.

Our beautiful lady tells me that "the post is ready." So adieu!

Your affectionate.

I will write when I hear from you. This goes to York.

To T. J. H., York.

[*Post-mark, May* 2, 1811.]

I FOUND this moment all your letters. They were in Great Portland Street. I blush when I write the direction to you. How salacious a street!

So *you* are in solitude. I wish I could be with you. I wish you could manage to come to town.

£200 per annum is really enough—more than I can want—besides, what is money to me? What does it matter if I cannot even purchase sufficient *genteel clothes?* I still have a shabby great-coat, and those, whose good opinion constitutes my happiness, would not regard me the better, or the worse, for this, or any other consequence of poverty. £50 per annum would be quite enough.

Why, you wish to be a Grandee! When heaven takes your father you will probably be in possession —as his eldest son—of some £3000 per annum, that perhaps convertible from 3 into 5 per cent. property. I should not know how to act with such a store; but —no, I would not possess above half of it! Yet,

well do I see why you would not reject it; you think it would possibly add to the happiness of some being, to whom you cherish a remote hope of approximative union—the indissoluble, sacred union of Love:

Why is it said thou canst not live
In a youthful breast and fair,
Since thou eternal life canst give,
Canst bloom for ever there?
Since withering pain no power possest,
Nor age, to blanch thy vermeil hue,
Nor time's dread victor, death, confess'd,
Though bathed with his poison dew,
Still thou retain'st unchanging bloom,
Fix'd tranquil, even in the tomb.
And oh! when on the blest reviving
The day-star dawns of love,
Each energy of soul surviving
More vivid, soars above,
Hast thou ne'er felt a rapturous thrill,
Like June's warm breath, athwart thee fly,
O'er each idea then to steal,
When other passions die?
Felt it in some wild noonday dream,
When sitting by the lonely stream,
Where Silence says, Mine is the dell,
And not a murmur from the plain,
And not an echo from the fell,
Disputes her silent reign.

Excuse this strange momentary mania! I am now at Miss Westbrook's. She is reading Voltaire's Dictionnaire Philosophique. I am writing to you, but I broke off a page ago. Have you hope? Can you have hope? Then, indeed, are you fitted for an Orlando Speroso,—if there is such an Italian word.

I have *faint* hopes: I have some, it is true,—just enough to keep body and soul together; but you ——. I almost despair. I have not only to conquer all the hateful prejudices of superstition, not only to conquer duty to a father—*duty*, indeed, of all kinds — but I see in the back-ground a monster more terrific. Have you forgotten the tremendous Gregory,—the opinion of the world, its myriads of hateful champions, its ten thousands of votaries who deserved a better fate, yet compulsatorily were plunged into this——. I tremble when I think of it."

Yet marriage, Godwin says, is hateful, detestable. A kind of ineffable, sickening disgust seizes my mind when I think of this most despotic, most unrequired fetter which prejudice has forged to confine its energies. Yes! This is the fruit of superstition, and superstition must perish before this can fall! For men never speak of the author of religion as of what he really was, but as being what the world have made him. Anti-matrimonialism is as necessarily connected with scepticism as if religion and marriage began their course together. How can we think well of the world? Surely these moralists suppose young men are like young puppies (as, perhaps, *generaliter* they are), not endowed with vision until a certain age. Adieu!

To T. J. H., York.

6, South Build., *8th May*, 1811.

My dear Friend,

Again I write to you from S. B. I have received very few of your letters; they have been sent to Portland Street, and I cannot recover them. There is one to-day from Yoxford; are you there? You have reason—you have a right to be surprised that I am not at Field Place, that I did not instantly fly thither in spite of everything. I will explain as soon as possible. You will hear that I am there in the course of a few days.

The estate is *entirely* entailed on me,—totally out of the power of the enemy. He is yet angry beyond measure—pacification is remote; but I will be at peace, vi et armis. I will enter his dominions, preserving a Quaker-like carelessness of opposition. I shall manage à l'Amérique, and seat myself quietly in his mansion, turning a deaf ear to any declamatory objections.

A few days ago I had a polite note from a man of letters, to whom I had been named, to invite me to breakfast. I complied, and dined with him on Sunday. He is a Deist, despising superstition, &c., &c., yet having a high veneration for the Deity, as he affirmed. And, in consequence, a long argument arose between him and some of his acquaintance; that a Deist certainly means the same as an Atheist; they differ but in name. He would not allow this,

with him the Deity is neither omnipotent, omnipresent, nor identical. He destroys, too, all those predicates in *non*, against which they entered their protest. He says, that God is comprehensible, not doubting but an adequate exertion of reason (which, he says, is by no means to be despaired of) would lead us from a contemplation of his works to a definite knowledge of his attributes, which are not unlimited. Now, here is a new kind of God for you!

In practice, such a Deist as this, is, as they told him, an Atheist; for he believes that the Creator is by no means perfect, but composed of good and evil, like man, and producing that mixture of these principles which is evident everywhere. He is a man of cultivated mind, and certainly exalted notions, and his friends do not entirely despair of rescuing him out of this damnable heresy from reason. His wife is a most sensible woman; she is by no means a bigot, but rather Deistically given. It is a curious fact that they were married when they were both Wesleyan Methodists, and subsequently converted each other.

Solitude is most horrible, in despite of the ἀφιλαυτία, which, perhaps, vanity has a great share in; but certainly not with my own good will. I cannot endure the horror, the evil, which comes to *self* in solitude.

I spend most of my time at Miss Westbrook's. I was a great deal too hasty in criticising her character. How often have we to alter the impressions which first sight, or first anything, produces. I really now consider her as amiable, not perhaps in a high degree, but perhaps she is. I most probably now am prejudiced, for you cannot breathe, you cannot exist if *no* traits of loveliness appear in co-existent beings. I think, were I compelled to associate with Shakespeare's Caliban, with any wretch—with the exception of Lord Courtney, my father, Bishop Warburton, or the vile female, who destroyed Mary—that I should find something to admire.

What a strange being I am; how inconsistent, in spite of all my boasted hatred of self: this moment thinking I could so far overcome Nature's law, as to exist in complete seclusion, the next starting from a moment of solitude—starting from my own company, as if it were that of a fiend—seeking anything rather than a continued communion with *self*. Unravel this mystery, but—no, I tell you to find the clue which even the bewildered explorer of the cavern cannot reach.

I long for the moment to see my sisters; you shall then hear from me even oftener.

I lost three letters, which I had written to you, in my carelessness. Adieu! My dear

friend, believe me ever attentive to your happiness.

I wish that vile family despotism, and the viler despotism of society, could never stand between the happiness of two beings. Excuse the φιλαυτία, it would constitute mine. Adieu!

Your eternal friend.

To T. J. H., York.

FIELD PLACE, *May*, 15, 1811.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I now write to you from hence. I have at last reached the place of my destination. I know you will anxiously await this. On my arrival I found my sister ill. She has been confined with a scarlet fever. The ignorance of these country physicians has, I think, prolonged her confinement. She is now much better, but scarcely able to articulate from a sore throat. You shall hear more when I write again. I must acknowledge that some emotions of pleasure were mingled with those of pain, when I found that illness had prevented her writing to me.

I have come to terms with my father. *I* call them very good ones. I am to possess £200 per annum. I shall live very well upon it, even after the legal opinion which you inclosed. I am also to do as I please with respect to the choice of abode. I need

not mention what it will be. *When* do you come to London? at what time?—a year; six months; four months?

F—— will be written to to-day; you may depend upon the execution of my palavering energies. It would be a strange—I do not know a stranger composition than would be the mélange, which you spoke of. Try—compose it. I am sure *I* could not. The "Confessions of Rousseau" are the only things of the kind that have appeared, and they are either a disgrace to the confessor, or a string of falsehoods, probably the latter. But the world would say that ours were the latter. Nor could I blame them for such an opinion, as probable truth is to be the judge of testimony, and singularity must be improbable, or it would not be singularity; nor do I think that it has often come under the observation of the world, that two young men should hold such arguments, come to such conclusions, and take such singular criterions for reasoning. Is not the last strangest? How goes on your tale? I have heard nothing of it. As for mine I cannot get an answer from L ——. Do they tremble? I thought the A —— printer was too stupid; and I defy a zealot to say it does not support orthodoxy. If an author's own assertion in his own book may be taken as an avowal of his intentions, it does support orthodoxy. I could not do more, and yet they say *Mine* is not

printable; it is as bad as Rousseau, and would certainly be prosecuted. All danger about prosecution is over; it was *never* more than a hum.

I will tell you a piece of the most consummate hypocrisy I ever heard of. A relation of mine was walking with my uncle (who, by the bye, has settled matters admirably for me), says this Wiseacre, "to tell you the truth, *I* am a Sceptic."

"Ah! eh!" thought the Captain, "old birds are not to be caught with chaff."

"Are you, indeed?" was the cold reply, and no more was got out of him.

I tell you this as the Captain told it me. Is this irrational being really convinced of what men have attained by the use of reason? If he is, he is a disgrace to reason, and I am sorry that the cause has gained weakness by the accession of weakness. But he is nothing — no-*ist*, professes no-*ism*, but superbism and irrationalism. He has forbidden my intercourse with my sister, but the Captain brought him to reason; he prevents it, however, as much as possible, which is very little.

My mother is quite rational, she says, "I think *prayer* and thanksgiving are of no use. If a man is a good man, philosopher, or Christian, he will do very well in whatever future state awaits us." This I call liberality!

You shall hear from me soon again. I write to

F—— . I know you will excuse a longer letter, as I am going to read to Elizabeth.

Your ever affectionate friend.

To T. J. H., York.
Inclose to T. Shelley, Esq., M.P.

SUNDAY, 17*th May*, 1811.
Captain Pilfold's, Cuckfield.

YOUR letter found me here this morning. Strange! you have not received one of mine, and I have written almost every day during my stay in London.

I go to Field-place to-morrow, whence you will hear from me again. I will write to F——. Poor fool! His Christian mildness, his consistent forgiveness of injuries amuses me; he is "le vrai esprit de Christianisme," which Helvetius talks of; he would call this a Christian.

I am now with my uncle; he is a very hearty fellow, and has behaved very nobly to me, in return for which I have illuminated him. A physician named Dr. J—— dined with us last night, who is a red-hot saint; the Captain attacked him, warm from "The Necessity," and the Doctor went away very much shocked.

You have before this certes received *some* of my letters. I expect to hear from you often; you will constantly receive accounts from Field-place, whither direct in future. I received a beautiful

little poem of yours; I did not acknowledge it, I believe, but I was not the less pleased. It is a melancholy subject, why will you continue to think on it? But you say "Melancholy is as necessary in poetry as breath to life, the Muses being the daughters of Memory, and consequently of Sadness." Miss Westbrook, the elder, I have heard from to-day; she improves upon acquaintance; or is it only when contrasted with surrounding indifference and degradation? But all excellence is comparative—exists by comparison; I have therefore a right. The younger is in prison; there is something in *her* more noble, yet not so cultivated as the elder,—a larger diamond, yet not so highly polished. Her indifference to, her contempt of surrounding prejudice, are certainly fine. But perhaps the other wants opportunity. I confess that I cannot mark female excellence, or its degrees, by a print of the foot, a waving of vesture, &c., as you can; but perhaps this criterion only holds good where an *angel*, not a mortal, is in the case.

Why will you compliment St. Irvyn? I never saw Delisle's, but mine must have been pla——.

Adieu! My dear friend, believe me eternally yours. You shall hear to-morrow.

In haste. Yours affectionately,

P. B. SHELLEY.

To T. J. H., York.

FIELD PLACE, *May* 17, 1811.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

Your letters have never reached me. These sallies of imagination are not noticed by vulgar postmen! but you know my direction now. Elizabeth is quite recovered in health.

It is most true that the mass of mankind are Christians only in name; their religion has no reality. So little, indeed, that they almost confess the *world* to be the only reason for their yet retaining their mummeries. Christ is not the Son of God: the world is eternal, their practice would seem to declare. There almost all are agreed, and in the speculative points of religion they seem to be as Atheistical as the most determined Materialist could desire. But what is this speculation—a dry inactive knowledge of what really is, not influencing the conduct? One would suppose that the annihilation of superstition would involve the fall of the world's opinion; but if the world's opinion were destroyed, superstition would be of little consequence, even if it did exist, which is indeed not very probable, as there would then be no temptations to self-deception. The opinion of the world, the loss of which is attended with much inconvenience, with the loss of reputation, which is by some considered as synonymous with virtue;—this is the support of many prejudices. Certain members of my family are no

more Christians than Epicurus himself was; but they regard as a sacred criterion the opinion of the world: the discanonisation of this saint of theirs is impossible until something more worthy of devotion is pointed out; but where eyes are shut, nothing can be seen! They would ask, are we wrong to regard the opinion of the world; what would compensate us for the loss of it? Good heavens! What a question? Is it not to be answered by a word? So I have but little of their confidence: the confidence of my sister even is diminished, that confidence once so unbounded: but it is to be regained. But enough of this! In letters, behold me enthusiastic, Quixotic, resolved, convinced, that things shall be as I order them,—that all my plans shall succeed. But I shall anticipate all your castle-buildings, so adieu to this subject also!

Why will you not send me some poetry? I wish to see it directly.

TO THE MOONBEAM.

Moonbeam, leave the shadowy vale,
To bathe this burning brow.
Moonbeam, why art thou so pale,
As thou walkest o'er the dewy dale,
Where humble wild flowers grow?
Is it to mimic me?
But that can never be;
For thine orb is bright,
And the clouds are light,
That at intervals shadow the star-studded night.

Now all is deathy still on earth,
Nature's tired frame reposes,
And ere the golden morning's birth
Its radiant hues discloses,
Flies forth its balmy breath.
But mine is the midnight of Death,
And Nature's morn,
To my bosom forlorn,
Brings but a gloomier night, implants a deadlier thorn.

Wretch! Suppress the glare of madness
Struggling in thine haggard eye,
For the keenest throb of sadness,
Pale Despair's most sickening sigh,
Is but to mimic me;
And this must ever be,
When the twilight of care,
And the night of despair,
Seem in my breast but joys to the pangs, that wake there.

There is rhapsody! Now, I think, after this, you ought to send me some poetry. Pray which of the Miss Westbrooks do *you* like? They are both very amiable, I do not know which is favoured with your preference. As to your manner, call it *manner*, if you will; perhaps it is proper thus to express a thing, which I thought was inexpressible. Call it so, then, for I know no other name.

How gets on your onion-loving Deist? Pray, what is there in onions and red herrings, which can make her less amiable? She is not very handsome either: Oh! that is all imagination.

I have written to F——; I wrote the moment your letter came, and make no doubt but he will

think me a very good young man. I cannot so deeply see into the inferences of actions, as to come to the odd conclusion, which you observed in the matter of Miss Westbrook. Where we have *facts*, they are superior to all the reasoning in the world. I should like to see your letter to F——.

Your ever affectionate.

To T. J. H., York.

FIELD PLACE, *May* 21, 1811.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

She is quite *well;* she is perfect in health! Now, that is enough; we have no fever to sympathise in: but who can minister to a *mind* diseased? She is very gay, very lively. I did not show her your last letter; it was too grave; and I think it is barbarous to diminish what the possessor considers a pleasure, although I have always considered that volatility of character evinces no capabilities for great affections. It is a kind of self-satisfaction in trivial things that is constantly exerting itself; it is a species of continually awakened pride; but it is not constitutional; it used not, however, to be the character of my sister—serious, contemplative, affectionate; enthusiastically alive to the wildest schemes; despising the world.

Now, apathetic to all things, except the trivial amusements and despicable intercourse of restrained conversation; bowing before that hellish idol, the *world;* appealing to its unjust decisions, in cases which demand a trial at the higher tribunal of conscience. Yet I do not despair; what she *once was* she has a power to be again; but will that power ever be exerted? I do not hesitate to say, that I think she is not worthy of us; *once* she was: once the fondest, warmest wish which ever I cherished was to witness the *eternal* perfectibility of a being, who appeared to me made for perfection. But she is now *not* what she was; she is not the singular, angelic being, whom I loved, whom I adored: I mourn her as no more. I consider the sister, whose happiness is mine, as dead.

Yet have I not hopes of a resuscitation? Certainly, or I would not tear my heart with the narration. But it is necessary that you should be informed of the real state of the case.

I will think no more of her, for she has murdered thought. Yes; I will think, and devote myself with ardour! On me,—yes, on me, descends the whole weight of my affliction! What right had I, day after day, to expatiate upon to another, to magnify to myself the excellence of a being who might change, who *has* changed?

What right had I to seek to introduce you to the destroyer?

I leave Field-place to-night; but return on Friday.

Your eternally affectionate,

P. B. SHELLEY.

To T. J. H., York.

[*No date*], Rhayader.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

I do *not* accuse you of temporising, or if I did, I retract that accusation. I have not read "Adeline," but shall, as soon as I can get it. Here one is as remote from the communications of friendship as the business of stupidity; it is a very high price to pay for the exemption from the latter, for which reason, it is my intention, as soon as financial strength will permit me to evacuate these solitudes, to come to York.

When I come, I will not come under my own name, it were to irritate my father needlessly; this is entirely a *philautian* argument, but without the stream, of which he is the fountain head, I could not get on. We must *live*, if we intend to live; that is, we must eat, drink, and sleep, and money is the necessary procurer of these things.

Your letter was sent to my mother last post-day; she feels a warm interest in you, as every woman must, and I am well assured that she will do nothing prejudicial to our interests. She is a good, worthy,

woman; and although she may in some cases resemble the fish and pheasant ladies, honoured with your animadversions of this morning, yet there is one altitude which they have attained, to which, I think, she cannot soar—Intolerance. I have heard frequently from her since my arrival here; she is of opinion that my father could not, by ordinary means have become acquainted with the proposed visit. I regard the whole as a finesse, to which I had supposed the Honourable Member's head-piece unequal. But the servants may—No, they do not even know your name.

I have heard from my sister since I came here; but her letter merely contains an account of a thunderstorm, which demolished a cottage of my father's, I will not, therefore, send it you. Adieu! Each post-day, till we meet, will carry a letter.

Yours sincerely.

The progress of our novel is but slow; however, I have written *one* more letter; it is for *you* to answer it:

"I find you still obstinate in what *I* call your error, as I am in what you must consider a damnable heterodoxy. I am truly surprised! The peep at church cannot have influenced you one way or the other; but it *may*; for it is the only sensual intelligence that you have received of this fair one.

I cannot call it intellectual, as even in the short view of her face which you had, you cannot pretend to guess her moral qualities; unless you intend to support, that the countenance is the index of the soul, which I cannot suppose you admit. Will you now, coolly, if *possible*, dispassionately, examine your own soul; and that which now seems almost necessarily annexed to its *essence*, your love for Sophia. Trace the grounds on which you love her, the origin of this passion; the things which strengthened, and the things which have weakened it. If you will do this, without either ridiculing my difference of opinion from yours, or employing any kind of declamation, overslurring, or sophistry, you will *then*, perhaps, convince me of what you regard as truth founded on proofs of resistless cogency, or, you will come to a knowledge of the incorrectness of your own ideas. Either of these is to be desired, since, if you, or I, be wrong, this error, wherever it lies, will necessarily terminate in disappointment."

To T. J. H., York.

[*Post-mark*, Rhayader].

I AM just arrived. I have only time to say that I am most sincerely yours, and I will explain on Wednesday why I could not come to York. No post here but three times a-week. P. B. S.

To T. J. H., York.

[*No date*], Cwm Elan, Rhayader.

My dear Friend,

John Grove has sent one of your letters; I fancy the *last*. I am now at Rhayader. The post comes in here but three times a-week, and goes out two hours after its arrival. Cwm Elan is five miles thence, and I have ridden to Rhayader, and now write in the post-office. Pray write. Confide in me. Believe that I am yours most sincerely. What have you to say? What, have you no secret? Write; you know that everything which you confide will be for ever held in the inviolable confidence of friendship. It would be a great injustice to suppose that my own will detained me from York. Nothing but absolute and positive necessity could have superseded my determined intention.

You will hear from me on Thursday, at least, I shall write then. Adieu!

Your eternally faithful,

P. B. S.

Miss Westbrook, Harriet, has advised me to read Mrs. Opie's "Mother and Daughter." She has sent it hither, and has desired my opinion with earnestness. What is this tale? But I shall read it to-night.

To T. J. H., York.

[*No date*], Cwm Elan, Rhayader, Radnorshire.

My dearest Friend,

I had a letter from my father; all is found out about my inviting you to Horsham, and my proposed journey to York, which is thereby for a while prevented. God send he does not write to your father; it would annoy him. I threw cold water on the rage of the old buck. I question whether he has let the family into the secret of his discovery, which must have been *magically* effected.

I had, previously to my intention of coming to York, accepted an invitation of a cousin of mine here to stay a week or two; whence I intended proceed to Aberystwith, about thirty miles off. I then changed my mind, in order to accompany you to York. As you made no secret of this, I mentioned in a letter to my father from London that such was my intention. He returned for answer, on the Thursday, that I might go, but that I should have no money from him if I did. The case therefore became one of extreme necessity; I was forced to submit, and now I am here. Do not think, however, but that I shall come to see you long before you come to reside in London; but open warfare will never do, and Mr. Peyton, which will be my *nom de guerre*, will easily swallow up Mr. Shelley. I shall keep quiet here for a few weeks.

I have heard of the miscarriage of one of my letters to you, by the pillage of the Rhayader mail. I shall write very often, and enclose Elizabeth's letters, when I have them.

This is most divine scenery; but all very dull, stale, flat, and unprofitable: indeed, this place is a very great bore.

I shall see the Miss Westbrooks again soon; they were very well, in Condowell, when I heard last; they then proceed to Aberystwith, where I shall meet them.

The post here is only three times a week, and that very uncertain, irregular and unsafe.

Let me hear soon from you. I will write every post-day.

Your most affectionate,

P. B. SHELLEY.

To T. J. H., York.

[*No date.*]

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Only two hours elapse between the exit and entrance of the post. Your letter to me was sent to my mother, who is very much interested in you.

I have at this moment no money, as Philipp's and the other debt have drained me; you will see me when I can get some. Although I am not so

degraded as to talk to you of pecuniary obligations, yet is it not almost too bad to subsist on you? No! I must stay here for a short time, because to contend against impossibilities may do for a lover, but will not for a mortal.

In the mean time, believe that I am not inattentive to my own interests. As things have been so quiet, I rather acquiesce in your opinion, that artifice may have been resorted to. As I returned no answer, *my* indiscretion, of which I have given two or three specimens, cannot either substantiate or annihilate his guesses.

I am all solitude, as I cannot call the society here an alternative of it. I must stay here, however, to recruit my finances, compelled now to acknowledge poverty an evil.

Your jokes on Harriet Westbrook amuse me: it is a common error for people to fancy others in their own situation, but if I know anything about love, I am *not* in love. I have heard from the Westbrooks, both of whom I highly esteem.

Adieu! I am going to ride with Mrs. Grove to Rhayader. I will write on Thursday.

Your's sincerely.

To T. J. H., York.

[*No date. Postmark*, Rhayader.]

My dear Friend,

You will perhaps see me before you can

answer this; perhaps not; Heaven knows! I shall certainly come to York, but *Harriet Westbrook* will decide whether now or in three weeks. Her father has persecuted her in a most horrible way, by endeavouring to compel her to go to school. She asked my advice: resistance was the answer, at the same time that I essayed to mollify Mr. W. in vain! And in consequence of my advice *she* has thrown herself upon *my* protection.

I set off for London on Monday. How flattering a distinction!—I am thinking of ten million things at once.

What have I said? I declare, quite *ludicrous*. I advised her to resist. She wrote to say that resistance was useless, but that she would fly with me, and threw herself upon my protection. We shall have £200 a year: when we find it run short, we must live, I suppose, upon love! Gratitude and admiration, all demand, that I should love her *for ever*. We shall see you at York. I will hear your arguments for matrimonialism, by which I am now almost convinced. I can get lodgings at York, I suppose. Direct to me at Graham's, 18, Sackville Street, Piccadilly.

Your inclosure of £10 has arrived; I am now indebted to you £30. In spite of philosophy, I am rather ashamed of this unceremonious exsiccation of your financial river. But indeed, my dear friend,

the gratitude which I owe you for your society and attachment ought so far to over-balance this consideration as to leave me nothing but that. I must, however, pay you when I can.

I suspect that the *strain* is gone for ever. This letter will convince you that I am not under the influence of a *strain*.

I am thinking at once of ten million things. I shall come to live near you, as Mr. Peyton.

Ever your most faithful friend,

P. B. S.

I shall be at 18, Sackville Street; at least direct there. Do not send more cash; I shall raise supplies in London.

To T. J. H., York.

[*No date*], Cwm Elan, Rhayader, Radnorshire.

My dear Friend,

To-morrow I shall hear from you, but cannot be able to answer your letter. The post is here what the waves in hell were to Tantalus.

I have heard from the Westbrooks, and from my mother: the latter cannot yet have received your last letter to me, as epistolary communications take some time in going to Sussex from York, viâ Rhayader.

I have been to church to-day; they preach partly

in Welsh, which sounds most singularly. A christening was performed out of an old broken slop-basin. This country is highly romantic; here are rocks of uncommon height, and picturesque waterfalls. I am more astonished at the grandeur of the scenery than I expected. I do not *now* much regard it; I have other things to think of.

I have had no cause to alter my opinion; I do not think that I am at liberty to entertain any hopes. I suppose, whilst York Minster exists, that you will indulge them yourself on my account.

Now, there is Miss F. D. Browne (certainly a tigress), yet she surpasses my sister in poetical talents—this every dispassionate criticism *must* allow: that lovely extract of her poems certainly surpasses any of Elizabeth's, and it was Elizabeth's poetry that first so strongly attracted my attention, charmed, and, as you were pleased to say, bewitched me; and which you admired, unless you were influenced by the vague, unconnected, prejudiced praises with which *I* would at times speak of Elizabeth.

For the rest, it is *now* far from being *my* wish that you should think more of the past. I foresee that all regrets cherished on that head will end in aggravating disappointment; I do not say despair, for I have too good an opinion of my firmness to suppose that I would yield to *despair*. Besides,

wherefore should I love her? A disinterested appreciation of what is in itself excellent; this is good, if it is so—but what I felt was a *passion*. It was, I suppose, involuntary: passion can evidently be neither disinterested, or its opposite. Is it not, then, the *business* of reason to conquer passion, particularly when I received *all* the evidences of her loveliness from the latter, and *none* from the former. Ought I not to doubt the worthiness of what depends on the mere impulses of the latter, for what could reason have to do with it any more than with peeping at a lady through a window. I do not know, on considering, however, if the lover would not display *more* reason then than at any other period of his passion, since for *once* he consented to refer to the evidence of his senses. Let me *hope* that I shall be dispassionate; I did *execrate* my existence once, when I first discovered that there was no chance of our being united. To enjoy your society and that of my sister has now for some months been my aim. *She* is not what she was; you continue the same, and ever may you be so!

I am *here* for the present, absolutely because I have no money to come to York, and because I *must* come there incog. I am what the sailors call banyaning. I do not see a soul; all is gloomy and desolate. I amuse myself, however,

with reading Darwin, climbing rocks, and exploring this scenery. Amusement!

I have seen the papers, and Burdon's poem. It is certainly admirable as an architectural poem; but do not let *me* be considered *envious* when I say, that it appears to me to want energy, since the very idea of my being able to write like it is eminently ludicrous. I wonder whether B—— is a fool or a hypocrite; he *must* be the latter.

Have you read the Missionary? It is a beautiful thing. It is here, and I could not help reading it again; or do you not read novels? Adieu!

Your sincere friend.

To T. J. H., York.

CUCKFIELD, *May* 26, 1811.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Inclosed is F.'s letter. Why have I not heard from you for a week, or more?

I take the opportunity of the Old Boy's absence in London to persuade my mother and Elizabeth, who is now quite well, to come to Cuckfield; because there they will be three, or more, days absent from this Killjoy, as I name him. I anxiously expect to hear from you to-morrow. Adieu. Keep up your spirits!

Your's most affectionately,

P. B. S.

To T. J. H., York.

CUCKFIELD, *June* 2, 1811.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have nothing to tell you, which you will like to hear. The affected contempt of narrowed intellects for the exertion of mental powers, which they either will not, or cannot comprehend, is always a tale of disgust. What must it be, when involving a keen disappointment? I have hesitated for three days on what I should do, what I should say. I am your friend, you acknowledge it. You have chosen me, and we are inseparable; not the little tyranny of idiots can effect it; not the misrepresentations of the interested. You are then my friend. I am sensible, and you must be sensible, that it is in conformity to the most rigid duty that I would advise you how I have combated with myself.

What is *Passion?* The very word implies an incapacity for action, otherwise than in unison with its dictates. What is reason? It is a thing independent, inflexible; it adapts thoughts and actions to the varying circumstances, which for ever change,—adapts them so as to produce the greatest overbalance of happiness. And to whom do you *now* give happiness? Not to others, for you associate with but few: those few regard you with the highest feelings of admiration and friendship; but perhaps there is but one;—and here is self again—not to yourself; for the truth of this I choose *yourself*,

as a testimony against you. I think; reason; listen; cast off prejudice; hear the dictates of plain common sense;—surely is it not evident? I loved a being, an idea in my own mind, which had no real existence. I concreted this abstract of perfection, I annexed this fictitious quality to the idea presented by a *name;* the being, whom that name signified, was by no means worthy of this. This is the truth: Unless I am determinedly blind—unless I am resolved causelessly and selfishly to seek destruction, I must see it. Plain! is it not plain? I loved a being; the being, whom I loved, is not what she was; consequently, as love appertains to mind, and not body, she exists no longer. I regret when I find that she never existed, but in my mind; yet does it not border on wilful deception, deliberate, intentional self-deceit, to continue to love the body, when the soul is no more? As well might I court the worms which the soulless body of a beloved being generates—be lost to myself, and to those who love me for what is really amiable in me—in the damp, unintelligent vaults of a charnel-house. Surely, when it is carried to the dung-heap, as a mass of putrefaction, the loveliness of the flower ceases to charm. Surely it would be irrational to annex to this inertness, the properties which the flower in its state of beauty possessed, which now cease to exist, and then *did* merely exist, because adjoined to it.

Yet you will call this *cold reasoning?* No; you will not! this would be the exclamation of the uninformed Werter, not of my noble friend. But, indeed, it is not *cold* reasoning, if you saw me at this moment. I wish I could reason coldly, I should then stand more chance of success. But let me reconsider it myself,—exert my own reasoning powers; let me entreat myself to awake. This—— I do not know what I say. I go to Field-place; to-morrow you shall hear again. I go to Field-place *now:* this moment, I have rung the bell for the horse.

Your eternal Friend.

I wrote to her to entreat that she would receive my letter kindly; I wrote very long. This is the answer. Are you deaf, are you dead? I am cold and icy, but I cannot refrain. Stay, I will come soon.—Adieu!

To T. J. H., York.

[*No date.*]

My dear Friend,

My arguments have been *your's*. They have been urged by the force of the gratitude which this occasion excited. But I yet remain in London; I remain embarrassed and melancholy. I am now dining at Grove's. Your letter has just been brought in; I cannot forbear just writing this. *Your* noble

and exalted friendship, the prosecution of your happiness, can alone engross my impassioned interest. I never was so fit for calm argument, as now. This, I fear, more resembles exerted action than inspired passion. I shall take another opportunity to-morrow of answering your long, interesting, and conclusive letter of yesterday.

Your Friend.

To T. J. H., York.

I wrote to you on Sunday. Reason have you to say that I was unreasonable. I was mad! You know that very little sets my horrid spirits in motion. I drank a glass or two of wine at my mother's instigation, then began raving. She, to quiet me, gave me pens, ink, and paper, and I wrote to you. Elizabeth is, indeed, an unworthy companion of the Muses. I do not rest much on her poetry now. Miss Philipps betrayed twice the genius: greater amiability, if to affect the feelings is a proof of an excess of the latter. I am sure you cannot deny that you are unprejudiced on this head.

I am a perfect hermit: not a being to speak with! I sometimes exchange a word with my mother on the subject of the weather, upon which she is irresistibly eloquent; otherwise all is deep silence! I wander about this place, walking all over the grounds, with

no particular object in view. I cannot write, except now and then to you—sometimes to Miss Westbrooks. My hand begins to hurry, and I am tired and ennuied. The only thing that has interested me, if I except your letters, has been one novel. It is Miss Owenson's Missionary, an Indian tale; will you read it? It is really a divine thing; Luxima, the Indian, is an angel. What a pity that we cannot incorporate these creations of fancy; the very thoughts of them thrill the soul! Since I have read this book, I have read no other. But I have thought strangely! I transcribe for you a strange melange of maddened stuff, which I wrote by the midnight moon last night.

Sweet star, which gleaming o'er the darksome scene
Through fleecy clouds of silvery radiance flyest,
Spanglet of light on evening's shadowy veil,
Which shrouds the day-beam from the waveless lake,
Lighting the hour of sacred love; more sweet
Than the expiring morn-star's paly fires.
Sweet star! When wearied Nature sinks to sleep,
And all is hushed,—all, save the voice of Love,
Whose broken murmurings swell the balmy blast
Of soft Favonius, which at intervals
Sighs in the ear of stillness, art thou aught but
Lulling the slaves of interest to repose
With that mild, pitying gaze! Oh, I would look
In thy dear beam till every bond of sense
Became enamoured——

Hopes, that swell in youthful breasts,
Live they this, the waste of time?
Love's rose a host of thorns invests;

Cold, ungenial is the clime,
Where its honours blow.
Youth says, The purple flowers are mine,
Which die the while they glow.

Dear the boon to Fancy given,
Retracted whilst it's granted;
Sweet the rose which lives in heaven,
Although on earth 'tis planted,
Where its honours blow,
While by earth's slaves the leaves are riven
Which die the while they glow.

Age cannot Love destroy,
But perfidy can blast the flower,
Even when in most unwary hour
It blooms in Fancy's bower.
Age cannot Love destroy,
But perfidy can rend the shrine,
In which its vermeil splendours shine.

Ohe! jam satis dementiæ! I hear you exclaim.

I have been thinking of Death and Heaven for four days. What is the latter? Shall we set off? Is there a future life? Whom should we injure by departing? Should we not benefit some? I was thinking last night, when from the summer-house I saw the moon just behind one of the chimneys, if she alone were to witness our departure? But I do not talk thus, or even think thus, when we are together. How is that? I scarce dare then, but now I dare?

I shall see you in three weeks. I am coming to York, in my way to Wales; where possibly I shall

not go. Be that as it may, you shall see me. I intend to pedestrianize. The post-fellow wants the letter.

Believe me your most affectionate.

You will hear on Monday.

To T. J. H., York;

[*No date.*]

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Your two letters were delivered to me. Believe me that I will not so soon give up a being whom I considered so amiable. I will not yet decide; but your conclusion is to the point, and terribly just. Unequivocal traces of her having yielded to the guidance of the *first* motives can be found. Are we then to despair?

But I quit the subject; the experiment shall be made, and I will abide by the result. I anxiously, eagerly anticipate the moment of trial. Moment! Ought it not rather to be years; or rather ought *years* even to decide a question so important?

You sent me some beautiful verses; but I am not accustomed to be flattered, and you will make me either vain past bearing, or confused past recovery, if you talk so of my weak essays of procedure on "the steep ascent" of perfectibility. Why, how dare I attempt to climb a mountain, when I have no guide to point out the path, but a few faint sparks, which at intervals illumine the gloom? For

these even am I not more indebted to *you* than to myself?

Certainly a saint *may* be amiable; she *may* be so, but then she does not understand—has neglected to investigate—the religion which retiring, modest prejudice leads her to profess. But one who certainly never has investigated the matter—seen the slight grounds upon which these dogmas rest,—surely the glaring inconsistencies of every system of mythology must strike her? Surely she can find benefits enough to return thanks to her Creator for, without having recourse to the mythological personages of superstition? Otherwise, by your criterion of amiability, that woman would deserve our most fervent attachment who worshipped all the Roman Pantheon, old or new.

I will write to-morrow. I am now called to Miss Westbrook; I was too hasty in telling my first unfavourable impression: she is a very clever girl, though rather affected. No! I do not know that she is. I have been with her to Clapham. I will tell you an anecdote. Harriet Westbrook has returned thither, as I mentioned. They will not speak to her; her schoolfellows will not even reply to her questions; she is called an *abandoned* wretch, and universally hated, which she remunerates with the calmest contempt. My third sister, Hellen, is the only exception. She, in spite of the *infamy*,

will speak to Miss Westbrook, because she cannot see how she has done wrong. There are some hopes of this dear little girl; she would be a divine little scion of infidelity, if I could get hold of her. I think my lessons here must have taken effect. I write to-morrow.

To T. J. H., York.

FIELD PLACE.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I wish I thought as you do; but I cannot; it is all in vain. Unwilling as I am, conviction stares me in my face, and mocks my lingering credulity. Oh! that you were here! That artifice the most subtle, of which degraded beings are capable, has been used, I doubt not; but although this tallies with the wishes of the artificers, a very different cause from their machinations effected it. A change, a great and important change, has taken place in my sister. Every little action, which formerly used to be so eloquent; every look, which was wont to be so expressive of openness, are enlisted in the service of prejudice. All is studied *art;* it has superseded, not combined with, nature. It is in vain that you try to persuade me to deceive myself longer. Your letter came this morning; I burnt that one of mine. I shuddered even to look at a page of it; the flames destroyed it. Your letter came;

the experiment you recommend has been tried within these few days, repeatedly, but without the slightest effect. Scorn the most virulent, neglect and affected pity for my madness, are all that I can obtain in reply. "You and your mad friend! Those, whom I have seen, and who have seen me, make but little excuse for your folly." This is all that I could hear; nothing else she would say. Then, far from being in the least affected by all I can say of my vexation, her spirits are uncommonly lively. I sometimes attempt the same liveliness, to see if congeniality even in folly would effect anything. No; even this is in vain; she is then, and then only, constantly silent. Oh! my friend, who is likeliest to be right? he who muses at a distance on the abstract idea of perfection, that I once dreamed, annexing it to a being whom one present cannot attribute it to?—one, too, who is, I may add, passionately prejudiced to that side of the question, the truth of which he has not admitted, or rather rejected deliberately.

I shall see you in July. I am invited to Wales, but I shall go to York: what shall we do? How I long again for your conversation! The ideas here rise in solitude; they pass through a mind as solitary; unheeded, gloomy retrospection introduces them—anticipation even gloomier bids them depart to make way for others; these will on: still, still

will they urge their course, till Death closes all. Wherefore should we linger? Unhappiness, disappointment, enthusiasm, and subsequent apathy follow our steps. Would it not be a general good to all human beings that I should make haste away? So you stay, stay, to make thousands happy: *one* is unworthy of you; and all my wishes are closed, since I have seen that union impossible and unjust, which once was my fondest vision. For myself, I know what an unstable, deceitful thing Love is; but still did I wish to involve myself in the pleasing delusion. The mist dissipates, the light is strong and clear; I am not blind, nor are you;—shall I be? It is neither to my own, nor to the being's happiness which I desired, that I should longer continue so! Where is *she* whom I adored? Alas! Where is virtue? Where is perfection? Where I cannot reach. Is there another existence? No! Then I can never reach it. Is there another existence? Yes! Then I shall live there, rendering and rendered happy.

Perhaps the flowers think like this; perhaps they moralize upon their state, have their attachments, their pursuits of virtue; adore, despond, hope, despise. Alas! then do we, like them, perish; or do they, likewise, live for ever?

But am I not a *philosopher?* Do I not pursue virtue, for virtue's sake? Why, then, do I wander

wildly? Why do I write madly? Why has sleep forsaken me? Why are you and my sister for ever present to my mind? Except when selfishness bids me start at what I am now,—at what I once was.—Adieu!

I am going to take the sacrament. In spite of my melancholy reflections, the idea rather amuses and soothes me. You shall hear from me soon again. I write very often, but have not always courage to send my letters.—Believe me,

Your's ever affectionately,

P. B. S.

Horsham, June Sixteen, 1811.

T. J. Hogg, Esq.,
Mrs. Doughty's,
Coney Street,
York.

T. Shelley.

In an age of penny letter stamps, a frank seems as strange, as in an era of Bath letter paper would an epistle written with a style on waxed tablets!

Would that some benevolent fairy, some kind genius, were able to recover the lost letters which the ardent young poet wrote to his friend, but "had not courage to send!"

FIELD PLACE, *June* 21, 1811.

DEAREST FRIEND,

I shall be with you in three weeks; possibly less. Take lodgings for me at York; if possible at

Mrs. Doughty's. It is best to be beforehand, as lodgings may be scarce. What pleasure is even the anticipation of an unrestrained converse! I shall leave Field-place in a fortnight. Old Westbrook has invited me to accompany him and his daughters to a house they have at Aberystwith, in Wales. I shall stay about a week with him in town; then I shall come to see you, and get lodgings.

How I wish that I could think exactly like you; that I could effectually imitate your sentiments,—sentiments which inspire language that acts almost like magic. When I read your letters, I think exactly, completely like you; I wonder, I am shocked at my own depravity, in doubting what then appears so evident—yet how evident!

I lay down your letter, I look around me, I consider, I behold the true state of the case. Machinations have indeed succeeded, but they are the machinations of worldly interest. It is true; it is true, I am on the spot, I observe it; I am not only cool, but most violently prejudiced to that opinion, against which now conviction presses.

Yet how is this? Fallen as she is, I almost think that I could participate in her views; that *I* could adjust the glittering tinsel ornaments of anticipated matrimonialism; that *I* could, like a fashionable brother, act as a jackall for husbands. Yet, no; this were too much. Anything but this

last, this only severe trial of prejudiced attachment! But yet, I could watch her steps; and even in this degraded state could I essay to minister to her happiness, even when she became bound to some fool in a bond fit only for a Jewess; even then I could rack my phiz into a smile to please her. But this must not be, I am not thus to be sacrificed; and much as I wish to think like you, yet I think it were imbecile to model my opinion upon yours in that only point, where there are many chances for my being right, were I the least enlightened of men,—many chances for your being wrong, although being what you are. On every other point, I believe that my opinion is yours; wholly, unreservedly yours. It is a sacrifice which I acknowledge is due to your superiority, where we have opportunities of having an equal view of the contested subject. But here! Do you not see you are under the influence of a tyrannical preconception, which you acknowledge increases somewhat under all these disadvantages?

Surely a man under a misguiding preconception is not a judge of the merits of its object, particularly when these merits are principally founded on two, or three, poems, *confessedly* not the subjects of universal approbation, founded on the testimony of a brother ardently prejudiced: *he then the sport of unreflecting sensation, alive to enthusiasm the most irrational;* he, than whom the gale that blows was not more

variable in anything, but friendship;—on the testimony of one who seized on some detached, noble sentiments, and then ascribed to her, whose they were, perfection, divinity,—all the properties which the wildest religious devotee ascribes to the Deity, whom he adores. Had I *then* been sacrificing at the altar of the Indian Camdeo, the God of mystic love; you, I am sure, will never become an unreflecting votary at its shrine. But I consider, I remember: there is one point of sympathy between you. *Matrimony*, I know, is a word dear to you;—does it vibrate in unison with the hidden strings of rapture,—awaken divine anticipation? Is it not the most horrible of all the means which the world has had recourse to, to bind the noble to itself? Yet this is the subject of her constant and *pointed* panegyric. It is in vain that I seek to talk to her. It is in vain that I represent, or rather endeavour to represent, the futility of the world's opinion.

"This, then, is the honourable advice of a brother!" "It is the disinterested representation of a friend!" To which, unanswered, followed a sneer, and an affected sportiveness of gaiety that admitted of no reply.

Have you read a new novel, "The Missionary," by Miss Owenson? It is a divine thing;—Luxima, the Indian priestess, were it possible to embody such a character, is *perfect*. "The Missionary" has

been my companion for some time; I advise you to read it. How much I admire the sentiments in your tale! You give up the world; you resign *it*, and all its vanities. You are right, and so do it! Political, or literary, ambition IS VICE. Nothing but one thing is virtue.—Adieu!

Your eternal Friend.

Yet I should almost regret your tale! How I wish you could send me the MSS.; but perhaps it would not be prudent; it might miscarry.

To T. J. H., York.

FIELD PLACE, Sunday, *June* 23, 1811.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You appear at last rational. I can find an excuse for madness, because I myself am often mad; but I am better pleased when I can pay the tribute of merited applause to *reason*, exerted, *too*, under discouraging circumstances. Your letter this morning betrays very much of the latter. You no longer blindly consider scepticism as *blasphemy;* you are sensible that what is human *may* be imperfect. From the vivid nature of the feelings which human beings excited, you are unwilling to admit it. You do right then; you act reasonably. I rejoice that you are resolved to think for yourself. I rejoice that you have at length fixed a criterion by which you may be decided on this interminable subject.

Come, then, my dear friend: happy, *most* happy, shall I be if you will share my little study; happy that you come on an errand so likely to soothe me, and restore my peace. There are two rooms in this house, which I have taken exclusively to myself; my sister *will* not enter them, and no one else *shall:* these you shall inhabit with me. You must content yourself to sleep upon a mattrass; and you will be like a State prisoner. You must only walk with me at midnight, for fear of discovery. My window commands a view of the lawn, where you will frequently see an object that will amply repay your journey,—the object of my fond affections. Time and opportunity must effect that in my favour with him, which entreaties cannot; indeed, I do not think it advisable to say too much on the subject; but more when we meet.

Do not trouble yourself with any baggage; I have plenty of clean things for you.

The mail will convey you from York to London, whence the Horsham coach will bring you to Horsham; (news!) there I will meet you at midnight, whence you shall be conveyed to your apartment.

Come, then, I intreat you; I will return with you to York. *I* almost *insist on your coming.* I shall fully expect you.

Yours most affectionately.

To T. J. H., York.

CUCKFIELD, *July* 1, 1811.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have despatched a letter to my sister, inclosing your last letter to me. I shall be there on Sunday. I hope I shall have a favourable answer.

If her interest in me has weight; if she yet regards me as a friend and brother, she cannot refuse. But no! This coercion! You shall hear on Sunday.

To T. J. H., York.

FIELD PLACE, *July* 4, 1811.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am surprised! For the sake of everything for which we live, listen to reason. If you will not listen to me, see the chapter in Locke, which F—— ought to have read, and profited by.

What is Enthusiasm, whether in religion, politics, or morality? all equally, inextricably fatuous; yours is in the last. You seek the happiness of another, under an idea that she is most amiable. Even admitting the last, is it not wrong when you see that you cannot contribute to her happiness, to render yourself unfit to do so to another? But do I not admit this? And yet it seems false. Who, surely, is the better judge? *you*—who never beheld her, never heard her converse, and, in addition to this—or *I*, who—still I am confessedly strongly *prejudiced*,—prejudiced like religious votaries, who reason, whilst they can, and when that ceases

to be possible, they *feel*. From this last there is *no* appeal. Certainly I do not mean to imitate these. And I still ask, who is the better judge? I, as I must be like one of these, or you, dispassionate, cool;—cool you cannot but be, and probably dispassionate. Little as you may be disposed to credit my feelings concerning *ἀφιλαυτία*, I have here no interest to act otherwise than I say. How, then, do I still persist in——. I own it; it was the fondest wish of my heart, and bitterly was I disappointed at its annihilation. I own it: I desired, eagerly desired to see myself and her irrevocably united by the rites of the Church, but where the high priest would have been Love; I pictured to myself Elysium in beholding my only perfect one daring the vain world, smiling at its silly forms, setting an example of perfection to an universe. I do not estimate, as you know, from relationship: I am cool, I hope. I should now grieve to see myself sacrificed, when there *may* exist a less imperfect being, and I might be perhaps considered as not wholly unworthy of her.

You do not flatter; you do not temporise; you are as severe with me as *you* can be. I own I cannot bear, you tell me, to see you sacrificing yourself, and every one who really esteems you. I write to-morrow.

Your ever affectionate.

To T. J. H., York.

CUCKFIELD, *August* 9, 1811.

HAVE you forgotten it? Have you forgotten that "laws were not made for men of honour?" Your memory may fail; it is human; but the infernal conclusion you have drawn, which I see you cannot, will not admit, is too much. There are some points on which reasoning is inefficient to convince the mind. No one could persuade me of the tortoise and Achilles business, even although they might say that I must believe it, because they had proved it, and I could find no flaw in their reasoning. I could not endure the bare idea of marriage, even if I had no arguments in favour of my dislike; but I think that I have. I shall begin *à la Faber*; how far I proceed thus, you have to judge.

Your first assertion, on which stands all the rest, does not profess to be founded on *proof;* but the long-established opinion—uncontroverted, undisputed, except by occasional characters of brilliancy, or darkness—that it is a duty to comply with the established laws of your country,—this I deny. Then virtue does not exist; or if it does, exists in so indefinite a manner,—Proteus-like so changes its appearances with every varying climate, that what is a crime in England becomes not merely venial, perhaps praiseworthy at Algiers; that each petty river, each chain of mountains, an arm of the sea constitutes a line of distinction between two different

kinds of duties, to both of which it is requisite that virtue should adapt itself. What constitutes real virtue?—motive, or consequence? Surely the former. In proportion as a man is selfish, so far has he receded from the motive which constitutes virtue. I have left the proof to Aristotle. Shall we take Godwin's criterion: Expediency? Oh! surely not. Any very satisfactory general reform is, I fear, impracticable: human nature, taken in the mass, if we compare it with instances of individual virtue, is corrupt beyond all hope;—for *these* laws are necessary: these are *not men of honour;* they are not beings capable of exalted notions of virtue; they cannot feel the passions of soft tenderness, the *object of whose regard is distinct* from selfish desire. Is it right that of these the world should be composed? Certainly not, were the evil to be obviated; but it is not to be obviated: all essays of benevolent reformers have failed. Any step, however small, towards such obviation, is, however, good, as it tends to produce that which, though impossible, yet were it possible, would be desirable. On this plan, then, do I recommend anti-matrimonialism. It is a feeling which (as we take it, and as it is now the subject of discussion) can at once be experienced by minds which at least adore virtue. It is, then, of general application; and if every one loved, then every one would be happy. This is

impossible; but certain it is that the more that love the more are blest. Shall, then, the world step forward,—that world which wallows in selfishness and every hateful passion, the consequence of an absence of reason; shall that world give laws to souls, who smile superior to its palsying influence, who let the tempest of prejudice rave unheeded, happy in the consciousness of the ἀφιλαυτία of motive. Oh! no. Can you compare Eloisa and a ruffian? Eloisa, who sacrificed all *self* for another! Macheath, who sacrificed every other for himself! These motives are wide apart as the antipodes,—wide as the characters themselves,—wide as virtue and vice. Take, then, your criterion, and measure by that. For God's sake, if you want more argument, read the Marriage Service before you *think* of allowing an amiable, beloved female to submit to such degradation. But you are convinced by force; but I do not admire the source of conviction; it is knightlike. I am no admirer of knights; their obedience was not founded on reason: and if we were errants, you should have the tilting all to yourself. Now, my friend, what can you want with six hundred pounds per annum? Surely you, with any amiable being, could easily live on half. Believe me, these are very secondary considerations. There! stay! I am wandering. But is the Antigone immoral? Did she wrong, when she acted in direct, in noble

violation of the laws of a prejudiced society? You will, I know, have candour to acknowledge that your premises will not stand; and I now *most perfectly* agree with you that political affairs are quite distinct from morality,—that they cannot be united.

To-morrow I go to Field-place. Direct henceforward there, till you hear again; as, if they have removed Elizabeth, I shall follow her. My letters will then be more interesting, as they will be filled with what is equally so to both. Heaven defend me from a disappointment!

Misses Westbrook are now very well. I have arranged a correspondence with them, when I will impart more of the character of the eldest.

Believe me, your most affectionate,

P. B. S.

Direct, until farther orders, to Captain Pilfold, Cuckfield, Sussex.

To T. J. H., York.

LONDON, *August* 15, 1811.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The late perplexing occurrence which called me to town, occupies my time, engrosses my thoughts. I shall tell you more of it when we meet, which I hope will be soon. It does not, however, so wholly occupy my thoughts, but that you and your interests still are predominant.

I have a rival in my sister's affections; do not tremble, for it is not one whom I have occasion to dread, if I fear merely those who are likely to be successful. His chances of success are equal to my own. He has the opportunity of frequently seeing and conversing with Elizabeth; yet his conversation is not such as is likely to produce any alteration in the resolve which she has taken, not to encourage his addresses. It is J. G.; she knows him well, and has known him long. Charles informed me of it, and I left London yesterday, though now returned purposely to converse with my sister on the subject. J. G. is certainly not a favoured lover, nor ever will be. I thought she appeared rather chagrined at the intelligence: she fears that she will lose an entertaining acquaintance, who sometimes enlivens her solitude, by his conversion into the more serious character of a lover. I do not think she will, as his attachment is that of a cool, unimpassioned selector of a companion for life. I do not think the better of my cousin for this unexpected affair.

I could tell you something, and will; you will then coincide with me. This, however, is an object of secondary importance. I know, from what I tell you, that others might be elevated by hope; but I would say to them,—Beware; for although her rejection of the bare idea of G. was full and unequivocal,

I have no reason to suppose that it proceeded from any augmented leniency for another. I know how deep is the gulf of despair, and I will not therefore increase any one's height; but must still think how unfortunate it is for any wooer that he ever heard her very name; he must long for the time when he will forget her, but which he now will say can never come!

'I am now returned to London; direct to me as usual, at Graham's. My father is here, wondering, possibly, at my London business. He will be more surprised soon, possibly!

My unfortunate friend, Harriet, is yet undecided; not with respect to me, but herself. How much, my dear friend, have I to tell you! In my leisure moments for thought, which since I wrote have been few, I have considered the important point on which you reprobated my hasty decision. The ties of love and honour are doubtless of sufficient strength to bind congenial souls—they are doubtless indissoluble, but by the brutish force of power; they are delicate and satisfactory. Yet the arguments of impracticability, and what is even worse, the disproportionate sacrifice which the female is called upon to make—these arguments, which you have urged in a manner immediately irresistible, I cannot withstand. Not that I suppose it to be likely that *I* shall directly be called upon to evince

my attachment to either theory. I am become a perfect convert to matrimony, not from temporising, but from *your* arguments; nor, much as I wish to emulate your virtues and liken myself to you, do I regret the prejudices of anti-matrimonialism from your example or assertion. No. The *one* argument, which you have urged so often with so much energy: the sacrifice made by the woman, so disproportioned to any which the man can give,—this alone may exculpate me, were it a fault, from uninquiring submission to your superior intellect.

Write to Graham's; you will hear from me again soon. All that I have told you here is in *confidence*. Adieu!

Yours eternally affectionate,

PERCY B. S.

To T. J. H., York.

CHAPTER XII.

I HAD spent several months at York agreeably, leading a studious and quiet life, but by no means a dull one. York, in fact, is not a dull place; it appears such to a traveller passing through its still, narrow streets, and to a cursory observer; but there is much pleasant, cheerful society, much genteel hospitality, and it is occasionally diversified and lighted up by various public solemnities, or amusements. For instance, we had races twice, I think; once on a very grand scale. There were assizes, continuing for a fortnight; and this recreation occurs twice in the year.

The superb Minster is a permanent gratification, of which one can never tire; and the musical services are well performed there.

There was no end of pretty girls of all ranks to be found in the streets, for the ancient city was always celebrated as the abode of beauty. It was at once pleasing and painful to meet them; delightful and dangerous.

There was a nice little theatre, with a sufficiently good company of actors; in the summer it has frequently the additional illumination of stars from the southern hemisphere. I saw Mrs. Jordan there, and to the greatest advantage, every night for three weeks. Moreover, I saw there, and there only, a most astonishing sight: two men, in theatrical costume, walked across the proscenium with their feet treading on the ceiling and their heads downwards, after the manner of flies. A surprising but uncomfortable spectacle; the danger of a fall, the risk of a broken neck, are too imminent and threatening. In what manner the feat was effected, nobody could discover; each man had a thick staff in his hand, and used it as a walking stick—what support or assistance this might render was not apparent. Their progress was slow, but it was sure, and without any visible effort.

Whilst I was stationary and tranquil, my friend was restless and uneasy; at one time he was in London, then at Field Place, now at Cuckfield, backwards and forwards; he even paid a visit to a cousin in Radnorshire. I received many letters from him, as I have shown, which I answered with tolerable punctuality; but having less leisure, my letters were not so long, or so numerous, as his. He too often omitted, in his overwhelming, everlasting hurry, to date his letters. Not one of those sent to

me from South Wales has a date, the post-mark being only "Rhayader." Unless a letter passed through London and the General Post Office, the date was not impressed upon it. Now it is otherwise, and through the mild expostulations of Lord Campbell, postmasters have been induced to adopt a neat legible stamp. If the rule of a single sheet still prevailed, this modern practice, an unquestionable improvement, would be truly useful; but it is rendered nugatory by the covers, which notwithstanding are, in some respects, a convenient arrangement. There is no necessary and abiding connection between the inclosure and its envelope; the latter is commonly destroyed, and then the letter is not only without a date, but it does not even appear, to whom the letter is addressed. Formerly a letter was a single sheet of respectable dimensions, with the address, at least, and the post-mark, such as it was, upon the back; but at present a smart cover, like a smart outer garment, serves to hide and gloss over the rags beneath it: thus, a modern letter consists too often of several small scraps of paper thrust into a well-glazed envelope.

The correspondence of Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Thrale, Piozzi, shows how often he urged dear Hetty to date her letters, and how steadily she persisted all the more in sending him billets without dates. Our great moralist might have learned, that since

the obstinate little Welsh woman was so intractable in trifles, it was vain to strive to make her anything better than a foreign fiddler's wife.

Shelley's epistles show the progress of his courtship, and that his marriage was not quite so hasty an affair as it is commonly represented to have been. The wooing continued for half a year at least, and this is a long time in the life, in the life of love, of such young persons. Harriet Westbrook appears to have been dissatisfied with her school, but without any adequate cause, for she was kindly treated and well educated there. It is not impossible that this discontent was prompted and suggested to her, and that she was put up to it, and to much besides, by somebody, who conducted the whole affair—who had assumed and steadily persisted in keeping the complete direction of her.

When a young man finds a young woman discontented with her school, or convent, and with her own family and friends, without much reason, a pretty face and soft manners too often make him forget that she is very probably a girl of a discontented disposition, and is likely to be dissatisfied wherever she may afterwards be placed.

The advocates of divorce, legal or illegal, formal or informal, would do well to remember, that a wife who quarrels with her present husband is perhaps a

person of a nature very apt to disagree with her next also, and with all future husbands. Thus, a man who cannot make himself comfortable in the dwelling which he now inhabits, is commonly of a restless, roving disposition, a rolling stone, and he will never find a house that will suit him long. "A man ought to be able to live with any woman;" Shelley told me his friend Robert Southey once said to him, "You see that I can, and so ought you. It comes to pretty much the same thing, I apprehend. There is no great choice, or difference!" But we anticipate.

The long vacation had commenced, my excellent and unlearned instructor in tautology,—in tautology the most prolix and barbarous,—had already taken wing to Northumberland, to enjoy for six weeks the healthy and agreeable diversion of grouse shooting. The artist had left behind him in his studio an attorney-pupil of some standing, and a clerk, who transacted his business during his absence; keeping up with him, however, a constant and animated correspondence of coach-parcels. My proficiency was as yet so small, that I could not be of any service to him, except under his personal superintendence. As I could no longer mould living mortgages out of reams of draft paper, or study breathing abstracts,—abstracts of title breath-

ing doubts and difficulties, for these were dispatched to the master-mind as soon as they arrived,—I soon felt that I was a mere incumbrance in a conveyancer's chambers, and, therefore, that the sooner I was discharged the better. Thereupon, to adopt a term of art, I changed my original purpose, and determined to take a vacation. The alternative was either to go home for a little partridge shooting, or to plan a tour; the latter was the more attractive, and it possessed the additional recommendation, that if my friend chose, he might join me and share in my excursion. As to the important question of costs and charges, a pedestrian could live as cheaply at inns as I lived at York, the only actual expense was a trifle; to go to one's ground on the outside of a coach, and to return in the same manner.

The Lakes of Cumberland, or Scotland? By the assistance of maps and guide-books I was trying to decide the question, when Shelley's letter announcing his marriage came, and at once carried the point in favour of Scotland. Book and map concurred in this, that making Edinburgh our temporary home, and the centre of our operations, we might in virtue of long walks, with the aid possibly of an occasional lift, visit many remarkable and interesting localities.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

Direct to the Edinburgh Post-Office—my own name. I passed to-night with the Mail. Harriet is with me. We are in a slight pecuniary distress. We shall have seventy-five pounds on Sunday, until when can you send £10? Divide it in two.

Yours,

PERCY SHELLEY.

To T. J. H.

This letter was written by my friend at York, in passing through at midnight; it did not come to me by the post, but was brought to my lodgings the next morning from the inn. I wrote immediately to Shelley detailing my projects, and promising to be with him almost as soon as my letter. I took my seat on the outside of a stage-coach, a front seat—carpet bags were not yet discovered, but I saw my small leathern portmanteau placed in the front boot.

Prudence prescribes as little luggage as possible on a journey; in genteel society an excuse serves a traveller quite as well as the most fashionable dress-coat; with vulgar people tawdry finery is indispensable, but the immortal gods hate the man, who trusts himself under the same roof with them. The day was in the first week of September, the

time of day was the afternoon; the weather was dry and fine.

We pursued our way northwards at a moderate pace, along a dusty road and between dusty hedges, over the great plain of York. It became dark, and we had supper, whether at Northallerton, or Darlington, I forget; I only remember, that it was tolerable, and that all our other meals were abominable.

From smoky, dirty, half-savage, but conceited Newcastle, the country was new to me; the night was fine, but quite dark, and probably cold, but I did not feel it. In those days cloaks were unknown, and great coats but little in use; I had no great coat then, nor for several years after. To my warm young blood, perfect, irreproachable health, and untiring energy of mind and body, food, sleep and clothes seemed to be superfluities, not necessaries. At what point of the road it became light I cannot remember; it was quite light, perhaps even rather late, when we reached Alnwick. Here we found a filthy and utterly useless breakfast at an odious little inn in a very narrow street. Our stay was short; there appeared to be no temptation to prolong it, if it had been permitted. I resumed my lofty, airy seat; the coach drove on, and in a moment we emerged from the narrow street and came suddenly in sight of the Castle. Its mag-

nificent aspect delighted me, especially when I saw it from the bridge below. I have often seen it since; the first view of its feudal grandeur is most impressive, but the impression soon wears off, one presently discovers faults; in one word, that it is a take-in. It is commonly asserted that there is nothing striking in the interior; this is not true; it is strikingly ugly, uncomfortable, ungenial, and inhospitable. The coachman, behind whom I sat, was rather wooden, like the folks of that region, but not uncivil; and perceiving that I was a curious traveller, he pointed out a few objects to me. For example; after climbing out of Belford up a steep, straight hill, he showed me the Farne Islands, and particularly the largest of them, Lindisfarne, the Holy Island: as a boy I had been familiar with the legendary history of St. Cuthbert, and I felt a strange desire to descend from the top of the coach to walk down to the shore, which appeared to be close at hand,—but it is not,—to hail a boat, and at once to be ferried over.

I have done this, but not until thirty years afterwards, and I had then the satisfaction of seeing, that there is nothing to be seen. How often is this the case with those objects which we most eagerly desire to see; and yet somehow they are not the less interesting on that account! From a hill, a mile or two before we came to Berwick, there was

a noble prospect of the sea, the mouth of the Tweed, and much besides; and I beheld for the first time the hills of Scotland, behind which I was to find my incomparable friend again. We descended to the river Tweed, and passed it by a very long bridge, upon which then stood an ancient gateway, with a picturesque and remarkable effect. Thirty years later, when I came again to this old town to grow very familiar with it, the old gateway had vanished. Our coach drew up at an inn not very far from the bridge; here we were to remain some time, and to dine. The inn was superlatively nasty, and the dinner impracticable, impregnable. I was glad to escape from the smell of stale fish, and from the other noisome smells, and to take a turn upon the walls; the scene was sparkling and pleasant. We continued our journey, and after riding a few miles farther I was informed that we had entered Scotland. The evening was delightful; at some points of the road we had fine sea views, and a bold, rocky coast; at one spot the guard made us get down and look from a bridge into a deep, woody ravine; he called the place, I think, Pease Bridge. There were open uninclosed fields, with excellent crops of corn in some places, very clean and promising, and a surprising breadth of flourishing turnips, as well Swedes as the common kind. I remarked at many of the farms small

windmills; these, I was informed, were used to turn winnowing and threshing machines; they were new to me. At other portions of the road we crossed extensive moors; and we passed through Dunbar, a dirty, stinking, fishing town. We saw for some time the Bass Rock, over the summit of which hovered prodigious flocks of sea birds. On the whole, I found much of pleasure and interest in what I saw of Scotland this afternoon.

Nor did I want for information and instruction. At the back of the coach sat a little, serious, middle-aged man, whom we picked up somewhere after entering Scotland; he, learning that I was a stranger, and that this was my first visit to a region which he assured us was the finest, happiest, most refined and civilized country in the known world, kindly took upon himself the trouble of informing, and indeed of forming my mind. He stood up at his place, behind a stack of luggage, and continually addressed me across the roof of the coach. He discoursed, or rather, I may say, lectured concerning the excellence of the district and of its inhabitants; of the agriculture of the Lothians, and its vast and infinite superiority to all other farming. Having discovered that I was going to Edinburgh, he expounded the admirable nature and character of that city, and told me all that I ought to see, and to believe on his authority.

"You will find it a most remarkable city; by far the most remarkable under the heavens, without any exception!"

"Yes! And it has a Review, as remarkable as itself!"

At that time, the "Edinburgh Review" had attracted general attention. The quarrel with Byron, and other persons of more or less distinction, and the protracted controversy with the University of Oxford, which was in full vigour whilst I resided there,—sundry pedantic performances redolent of heavy pleasantry having been published by certain slow-witted dullards of that place,—had brought the "Review" into notice. I was tempted, therefore, to try my loquacious little instructor on that popular theme. I had sounded the key-note. The "Review," during the rest of the journey, wholly engrossed his organs of speech in one unceasing peroration concerning the critical journal, which soon became exceedingly tiresome; and not only tiresome, but painful,—physically painful; for I could not show my back with any decency to so powerful an orator; and I was obliged, in courtesy, to bend my neck and to try to look the petulant little haranguer in the face.

Mr. Pennant, with all the gravity of a Welshman and a naturalist, writes in perfect seriousness: "Asses are very rare in Scotland; there are none

in the north." But a greater and a graver than Pennant was there; and he asseverated that Oxford was for ever silenced: that University was totally annihilated; she could never show her face again,—never hold up her head; she was extinguished; she must at once retire; she must leave the work of education to abler hands than her own. Shoals of students would come flocking thence by thousands to Edinburgh, to Aberdeen, to St. Andrews, and to the other renowned Scottish Universities. He spoke much about the Oxford Strabbo, without appearing at all to know what he meant. I longed to ask him, what he supposed the Oxford Strabbo really was; but I did not venture. He talked very largely of "Mr. Francis Jeffrey, of Edinburgh, advocate;" but he did not seem to be personally acquainted with him; and indeed he admitted, in answer to my question, that he was not. "Mr. Francis Jeffrey, of Edinburgh, advocate,"—for he always gave the name of the learned editor in full, with the additions,—"is a little man, and a very clever man." Both these facts are undoubted. I had afterwards abundant opportunity to verify them myself. "He very wisely holds that ridicule is the real and genuine, and indeed the sole test of truth: that it is still more necessary than even the laws themselves for the due maintenance of order in a state of high civilisation. And, accordingly, he has used

it most unsparingly, as you will yourself allow, in his critical journal; and he purposes to continue so to use it."

It began to grow dark; and at the approach of night all creatures feel fatigue, even the most persevering, and grow weary at last, even of wearying others. The little prig himself got tired of lecturing; he became silent, and at some place, where we changed horses, quietly withdrew.

It was the first time I ever underwent this sort of thing; I have suffered it often since, God knows how often; so often, in truth, that being once told that it was impossible accurately to define a philosopher, I was provoked to answer: "Oh, no! A philosopher is a Scotch clerk in a public office in England!"

We entered Edinburgh in the dark, through mean, narrow streets, the aspect of which, by the faint light of dim lamps ill accorded with the magnificent promises of the splendour of the proud metropolis of the whole earth,—of the capital of social elegance, and of perfect refinement.

I remained for the night at the wretched inn where the coach stopped, for I knew of no other, although it was a disgusting place. Nobody appeared to regard me. I didn't understand what they said; neither could I make the people understand me. In truth, they did not care to know what I wanted. However, I succeeded, with some difficulty, in catch-

ing hold of a stupid, red-haired, bare-necked, bare-footed, dirty girl, by the arm; I held her fast, and made her conduct me up stairs to a squalid little bed-room. When we got there, she found out what I required: another light, besides that which she held in her hand, of a sudden broke upon her, and she exclaimed with vivacity, "Oh! you will want a chamber." I observed the impressions of naked and muddy feet, of bare toes and heels, on the hearth and on the floor, but no other traces of social elegance: the young wench was half naked, as it was; had she been stark, most assuredly I should not have taken her for one of the three Graces, whatever the little lecturer might have affirmed. I took the candle from her, and she withdrew, muttering some words of her sweet northern Doric, which probably signified, "Good night!" The bed was less distasteful than the chamber. I had passed thirty hours, or more, in the open air, on the top of the coach, and had travelled two hundred miles: this was a powerful opiate.

If such be, in very deed, the beauteous city of Minerva, the chosen residence of Apollo and the Muses, the true abode of Beauty, of the Loves and Graces, I wish I were back again at my lodgings in York, or at one of the inns near the Lakes, which tourists report as comfortable! But a sound

refreshing sleep soon put an end to all reflections, wishes, and regrets: I made one sleep.

When I awoke in the morning, it was quite light: bell there was none; calling out, however loud, was disregarded, my little sylph would not come, nor would any of her fairy sisters, if she had any. I put on my clothes, and went down stairs into a common room, an uncommonly dirty, dingy hole; here I procured some breakfast, which was not so much amiss. I then sallied forth to discover if the rest of the New Jerusalem was as mean and shabby as what I had already seen; I more than half suspected that it was. I soon emerged from the narrow streets; and then, O! glorious spectacle, by force of contrast made still more noble, more glorious; I wandered about, lost in admiration. I ascended the Castle-hill, the Calton-hill, my delight still increasing. Yet it was a meeting of extremes: I beheld magnificence,—triumphs of art and of nature; yet I saw many odious and revolting objects, which I had never met with, even in the poorest places in England, and which I forbear to describe.

Having at once satisfied and inflamed my curiosity, I began to think of the main purpose of my long journey,—my college friend. I had written to him that I would join him here, but I had not given him any address, for I did not know any, neither had I received a direction from him. Was there a better,

a speedier course, than the hope of a chance meeting in the streets of a large city? I bethought me of the post-office; he might have sent a letter for me thither. I was standing musing on the bridge which connects the New Town with the Old: a grave, white, middle-aged man was passing. I inquired of him for the post-office.

"Come with me, I am going there myself. You are a stranger?"

"Yes."

"You never saw so fine a bridge before, as this is, I am very sure. It is the finest in the known world!"

"I have seen a finer river; one with more water in it."

He seemed much disconcerted. I told him how I was situated.

"They will give you the address you require at the post-office, they are sure to have it; we will go to the post-office together; but you must first see our new University, as you are a stranger."

We passed the post-office and came to a large building, not only unfinished, but not in progress. It appeared that the work had ceased for want of funds.

"What do you think of that, sir?"

"When it is completed it will be a very handsome building, and, I dare say, very commodious."

"Not only that, but if all the buildings at Oxford and Cambridge were moulded and amalgamated together into one edifice, the effect would not be the same; it would be far inferior!"

I had learned that it was most discreet to be silent. We returned to the post-office. There was no letter for me, but they gave me my friend's address in George Street. Whether he had left it there for me, or for his own letters, I did not ask.

"I am going in that direction, myself. I will point out George Street to you."

We returned on our steps.

"That is the Register-Office," said my kind, grave guide; "it is the finest building on the habitable earth."

I looked him in the face; I had wounded his feelings about the bridge, without at all diminishing his obliging good-nature, so I held my peace.

"It is universally acknowledged to be so! But you must see the interior!"

We entered it; it was a handsome structure, certainly; perhaps needlessly large. We walked along Princes Street together, at the corner of a cross street he took leave of me with sundry profound and solemn bows, having previously pointed out George Street. I soon set foot in George Street, a spacious, noble, well-built street; but a deserted street, or rather a street which people

had not yet come fully to inhabit. I soon found the number indicated at the post-office; I have forgotten it, but it was on the left side—the side next to Princes Street. I knocked at the door of a handsome house; it was all right; and in a handsome front-parlour I was presently received rapturously by my friend. He looked just as he used to look at Oxford, and as he looked when I saw him last in April, in our trellised apartment; but now joyous at meeting again, not as then sad at parting. I also saw—and for the first time—his lovely young bride, bright as the morning,—as the morning of that bright day on which we first met; bright, blooming, radiant with youth, health, and beauty. I was hailed triumphantly by the new-married pair; my arrival was more than welcome; they had got my letter and expected to rejoice at my coming every moment. "We have met at last once more!" Shelley exclaimed, "and we will never part again! You must have a bed in the house!" It was deemed necessary, indispensable. At that time of life a bed a mile or two off, as far as I was concerned, would have done as well; but I must have a bed in the house. The landlord was summoned, he came instantly; a bed in the house; the necessity was so urgent that they did not give him time to speak. When the poor man was permitted to answer, he said, "I have a spare bed-room, but it is

at the top of the house. It may not be quite so pleasant." He conducted me up a handsome stone staircase of easiest ascent; the way was not difficult, but very long. It appeared well nigh interminable. We came at length to an airy, spacious bed-room. "This will do very well." A stone staircase is handsome and commodious, and, in case of fire, it must be a valuable security; but whenever a door was shut it thundered; the thunder rolled pealing for some seconds. I was to lodge with Jupiter Tonans at the top of Olympus. Of all the houses in London, with which I am acquainted, those in Fitzroy Square alone remind me, by their sonorous powers, of Edinburgh, and of the happy days which I passed in that beautiful city. On returning to my friends our mutual greetings were repeated; each had a thousand things to tell and to ask of the rest. Our joy being a little calmed, we agreed to walk. "We are in the capital of the unfortunate Queen Mary," said Harriet; "we must see her palace first of all." We soon found Holyrood House; a beggarly palace, in truth. We saw the long line of Scottish monarchs, from Fergus the First downwards, disposed in two rows, being evidently the productions of some very inferior artist, who could not get employment as a sign-painter. We saw Mary's bed-room, the stains of Rizzio's blood, and all the other relics. These objects, intrinsically mean and

paltry, greatly interested my companions, especially Harriet, who was well-read in the sorrowful history of the unhappy queen. Bysshe must go home and write letters, I was to ascend Arthur's Seat with the lady. We marched up the steep hill boldly, and reached the summit. The view may be easily seen, it is impossible to describe it. It was a thousand pities Bysshe was not with us, and then we might remain there; one ought never to quit so lovely a scene.

"Let us sit down; probably when he has finished writing he will come to us."

We sat a long time, at first gazing around, afterwards we looked out for the young bridegroom, but he did not appear. It was fine while we ascended; it was fine, sunny, clear, and still, whilst we remained on the top; but when we began to descend, the wind commenced blowing. Harriet refused to proceed; she sat down again on the rock, and declared that we would remain there for ever! For ever is rather a long time; to sit until the wind abated would have been to sit there quite long enough. Entreaties were in vain. I was hungry, for I had not dined on either of the two preceding days. The sentence —never to dine again—was a severe one, and although it was pronounced by the lips of beauty, I ventured to appeal against it; so I left her and proceeded slowly down the hill, the wind blowing fresh.

She sat for some time longer, but finding that I was in earnest, she came running down after me. Harriet was always most unwilling to show her ankles, or even her feet, hence her reluctance to move in the presence of a rude, indelicate wind, which did not respect her modest scrupulousness. If there was not much to admire about these carefully-concealed ankles, certainly there was nothing to blame.

The accommodations at our lodgings in George Street were good, and the charges reasonable; the food was abundant and excellent; everything was good, the wine included: in one particular only was there a deficiency, the attendance was insufficient, except at meals, when our landlord officiated in person. One dirty little nymph, by name Christie, was the servant of the house—the domestic, she was termed; she spoke a dialect which we could not comprehend, and she was, for the most part, unable to understand what we southerns said to her, or indeed anything else, save only perchance political economy and metaphysics. After ringing the well-hung bells many times in vain, she would suddenly open the door, and exclaiming, "Oh! The kittle!" darted off to be brought back again, after a long delay, by the like exertions and with the like result. Her sagacity had discovered that we drank much tea, and therefore often required the services of the tea-kettle. However, if she was of no great use to

us, the poor little girl at least afforded us some amusement.

Shelley was of an extreme sensibility—of a morbid sensibility—and strange, discordant sounds he could not bear to hear; he shrank from the unmusical voice of the Caledonian maiden. Whenever she entered the room, or even came to the door, he rushed wildly into a corner and covered his ears with his hands. We had, to our shame be it spoken, a childish mischievous delight in tormenting him; in catching the shy virgin and making her speak in his presence. The favourite interrogatory so often administered was, "Have you had your dinner to-day, Christie?" "Yes." "And what did you get?" "Sengit heed and bonnocks," was the unvarying answer, and its efficacy was instantaneous and sovereign. Our poor sensitive poet assumed the air of the Distracted Musician, became nearly frantic, and, had we been on the promontory, he would certainly have taken the Leucadian leap for Christie's sake, and to escape for ever from the rare music of her voice.

"Oh! Bysshe, how can you be so absurd? What harm does the poor girl do you?"

"Send her away, Harriet! Oh! send her away; for God's sake, send her away!"

On the whole, nothing could be better than our position in George Street; yet few things are abso-

lutely perfect even in Scotland, even in Edinburgh itself. It is allowable to discern spots in the sun; science, it is believed, derives benefit from such discoveries.

At my first breakfast our landlord kindly inquired, how I had slept.—Not very well.—How so?—The bed was so intolerably hard, and therefore so cold.—Oh! There was no bed; you had no bed; I would not have put you to sleep upon a feather-bed; you could never sleep upon a feather-bed; you have a nice wholesome mattress, a straw mattress!—I should like to lie upon something softer.—Oh! You cannot have it! You must lie upon a mattress, a straw mattress; health enjoins it.—But it is as hard as this table!—Very well! Very like; and so it ought to be. You cannot lie too hard. You might lie very well upon this table; it would be very highly salubrious!—I thought otherwise: but it was quite plain that there was no redress. I had got into the land of absolute wisdom, and I must make the best of it: I had come there to learn, and not to teach. I lay very hard and very cold, and for two or three nights I slept little, but I got accustomed to it in time, and slept as well as if I had the Lincolnshire feather-bed, upon which I reposed for a year whilst I was preparing most comfortably for college in the snug old vicarage of a worthy Fen parson.

One more mote in my neighbour's eye, and then I will return to consider the beam in my own. We occupied, as has been stated, the ground-floor in George Street: when I took up my abode there, I hung up my hat in the handsome hall, or passage, of the very handsome house. In a day or two it disappeared; I asked about it, but I could only learn what I knew already, that it was gone. Who could have taken it? I do not know, I am sure; there is nobody in the house except yourselves and the people who occupy the first floor, and they are high people—very high indeed! However high they might be, it should seem that the grandees of Scotland of the first class were not so high as to be above prigging a hat. In those days a hat was a hat, which, in a strict sense, it has long ceased to be, costing then thirty-five shillings at least. I was much censured for leaving my new hat in the passage: all I could say in excuse was, that when I first suspended it there, I asked the landlord himself, a most respectable man, if it would be safe there? He answered—and being a Scotchman, as such, of course, he was infallible—"Oh! Perfectly!" To be sure he added what was said to be a considerable qualification, and which ought to have put me on my guard, "It will be quite as safe there as anywhere else in Scotland." I ought to have been more cautious, I was told, in a country where nothing is too ho or

too heavy; where every man takes whatever he can get, from the Senator of the College of Justice down to the most profound and beggarly metaphysician. However this may be, in those days, as I have said, a hat was certainly a hat; not only was it very dear, but, what was still worse, very hard and very heavy, making itself felt as well by the head, as by the pocket. It is right to add, that our liberal landlord made a very liberal offer,—it was of course declined,—to pay the price of a very nice hat which I bought in Princes Street, and in future always prudently brought with me into our sitting-room.

Amongst the many delicacies of the place, and they were many, short bread, to which we were then first introduced, appeared to be a very nice thing, —I must now add, for a young stomach.

Shelley went every morning himself, before breakfast, to the post-office for his letters, of which he received a prodigious number; and he used to bring back with him splendid plates of virgin honey. I never saw such fine honeycombs before or since, and it was delicious. Shelley was for the most part indifferent to food, to all meats and drinks, but he relished this honey surprisingly: so much did he enjoy it, that he was almost offended when I said, exquisite though it was, it was a shame to eat it; wantonly to destroy, merely to flatter the palate, so beautiful and so wonderful a structure, was

as barbarous as it would be to devour roses and lilies. It was far too great a marvel to be eaten; it should only be looked at, kept entire, to be admired. It approaches cannibalism to feed on it; indeed, it is too like eating Harriet! I think you would eat Harriet herself!

"So I would, if she were as good to eat, and I could replace her as easily!"

"Oh! fie, Bysshe!" the young lady exclaimed, who inclined somewhat to my heresy, feasting her eyes with the honeycomb, and declaring it was quite a pity to eat it: this the greedy poet said was tiresome.

> "The sound of the church-going bell
> These valleys and rocks never heard."

Since the Reformation they had never heard it; and in this particular Presbyterian Edinburgh, so far advanced in enlightened wisdom, secular and ecclesiastical, afforded us a strong contrast to our poor, ignorant, benighted Popish Oxford.

After breakfast on Sunday, a verbal announcement was made to us by our landlord himself: "They are drawing nigh unto the kirk!"

On looking from the windows, we saw the grave Presbyterians, with downcast looks, like conscience-stricken sinners, slowly crawling towards their place of gathering. We were admonished—

for Shelley said, one Sunday, "Let us go and take a walk"—that it was not lawful to go forth to walk purposely and avowedly on the Sabbath, a day of rest and worship; but if a man happen to find himself in the streets casually, he may walk a little with perfect innocence, only it is altogether unlawful to go out from his door with the mind of taking a walk of pure pleasure.

After this serious and edifying warning we sometimes casually found ourselves without the house on a Sunday, and walked about a little, as we believed, innocently.

We were taking such a harmless stroll, by mere accident, in Princes Street; Bysshe laughed aloud, with a fiendish laugh, at some remark of mine.

"You must not laugh openly, in that fashion, young man," an ill-looking, ill-conditioned fellow said to him. "If you do, you will most certainly be convened!"

"What is that?" asked Shelley, rather displeased, at the rude interpellation.

"Why; if you laugh aloud in the public streets and ways on the Christian Sabbath, you will be cast into prison, and eventually banished from Scotland."

The observance of the Sabbath in North Britain, as I have been credibly informed, has been, since the year of the comet, like the manufacture of hats

in England, decidedly improved, both articles being now much lighter, and less oppressive.

I once asked the way to some place in Edinburgh of a staid old gentlewoman: "I am going the same road in part, and I will attend you."

We proceeded leisurely along together; she conversed gravely, but affably: How do you like this; how that; "How do you like our public worship?"

"I have not assisted at it yet."

"Oh! but you must; you must go and hear Dr. Mac Quisquis; he is a fine preacher; an accomplished divine; he wrestles most powerfully with Satan, every Sabbath morn!"

I promised my obliging conductress to go and witness these spiritual struggles with a ghostly enemy; but I could not redeem a pledge somewhat rashly given, for I did not know in what arena this powerful gymnast fought. I did not even catch the name of the accomplished divine. One Sabbath morn, however, when we were again advised that they were drawing nigh unto the Kirk, Shelley and myself boldly resolved to draw nigh also; the lovely Harriet would not accompany us, alleging, and with some probability, that the wearisome performances would give her a head-ache. We joined the scattered bands, which increased in number as we advanced, creeping with them for a considerable

distance. We reached a place of worship, and entered it with the rest; it was plain, spacious, and gloomy. We suffered ourselves rather incautiously to be planted side by side, on a bench in the middle of the devout assembly, so that escape was impossible. There was singing, in which all, or almost all, the congregation joined; it was loud, and discordant, and protracted. There was praying, there was preaching,—both extemporaneous. We prayed for all sorts and conditions of men, more particularly for our enemies. The preacher discoursed at a prodigious length, repeating many times things that were not worthy to be said once, and threatening us much with the everlasting punishments, which, solemnly and confidently, he declared were in store for us. I never saw Shelley so dejected, so desponding, so despairing; he looked like the picture of perfect wretchedness; the poor fellow sighed piteously, as if his heart would break. If they thought that he was conscience-stricken, and that his vast sorrow was for his sins, all, who observed him, must have been delighted with him, as with one filled with the comfortable assurance of eternal perdition. No one present could possibly have comprehended the real nature of his acute sufferings,—could have sympathized in the anguish and agony of a creature of the most poetic temperament that ever was bestowed, for his weal or his woe, upon any human being, at

feeling himself in the most unpoetic position in which he could possibly be placed. At last, after expectations many times disappointed of an approaching deliverance, and having been repeatedly deceived by glimpses of an impending discharge, and having long endured that sickness of heart caused by hopes deferred, the tedious worship actually terminated.

We were eagerly pressing forward to get out of our prison, and out of the devout crowd, but a man in authority pushed us aside :

"Make way for the Lord Provost and the Bellies!"

We stood on one side for a while, that the civic dignitaries might pass. My friend asked, in a whisper, what in the world the man meant? I informed him that a Provost is a Mayor, and that a Belly (Baillie) is Scotch for an Alderman.

It was a consolation to the poor sufferer to laugh once more. It had seemed to him in his captivity that his healthful function had ceased for ever.

We made the best of our way homewards, and at a brisker pace than the rude apostle of the north, John Knox, would have approved of, discussing the wonderful advantages of a ritual, and their comfortless, inhuman church music.

Acknowledging the superiority of our chapels, churches, and cathedral in Oxford, and the vast benefits of written sermons, after having just had

painful experience how tedious a thing it was to listen to an extemporaneous discourse; and, moreover, how distressing for the hearer to have to sit and wonder what monstrous extravagance, what stupid and preposterous absurdity the heavy orator, with no succour at hand, would utter next.

The malicious Harriet laughed at our sufferings, and made herself merry with the deep dejection of her husband.

We were never tempted to enter the Kirk again. Satan must very shortly prevail, if he could only be kept under, by our presence, at such powerful wrestlings!

Yet were we, poor Oxford scholars, predestined to undergo another trial of the same kind, but less severe, and far more brief,—sharp, though short. It was notified to us one Sunday evening, as we were sitting together after dinner, that "They are drawing nigh unto the Catechist,—children and domestics must attend."

We had discovered that little Christie was going, and as we already knew something of her temporal concerns, ("oh! the kittle!") we were curious to learn a little about her spiritual condition. Accordingly, we followed her at a distance.

At the first notification, Bysshe, to my surprise, exclaimed, "Let us go!"

Harriet sought to dissuade him, and earnestly, as if she thought we were going to a place where he would probably have his throat cut. But persuasion availed not. We followed the slow advance of children and domestics still more slowly, and entered a roomy building, gloomy and unadorned, like a Kirk. A man in rusty black apparel, of a mean and somewhat sinister aspect, was standing in the middle of the floor; children and domestics were standing round him; we remained in a corner.

"Wha was Adam?" he suddenly and loudly asked.

Nobody answered. He appeared to be much displeased at their silence; and after a while he repeated the question, in a louder voice,

"Wha was Adam?"

Still no answer. The name is so common in these anti-episcopalian regions. Did he ask after Adam Black, Willie Adam, or Adam, late of Eden, the protoplast; he did not limit his question, but put it in the most general terms. Nobody answered it.

The indignation of the Catechist waxing hot, in a still louder and very angry tone he broke forth with,—

"Wha's the Deel?"

This was too much; Shelley burst into a shrieking laugh, and rushed wildly out of doors. I slowly followed him, thinking seriously of Elders, Presby-

teries, and Kirk Synods. However, nothing came of it; we were not cast into prison.

Shelley and his future had travelled from London to Edinburgh by the mail, without stopping. A young Scotch advocate was their companion in the coach for part of the way; he was an agreeable, obliging person. Shelley confided to him the object of his journey, and asked his advice.

The young lawyer told the young poet how to get married. They followed his directions, and were married on their arrival in Edinburgh,—how, or where, I never heard. Harriet had some marriage lines, which she sent to her father. I never saw them.

This young man lived in Edinburgh with his family, but at that time they were all in the country: he was alone in the empty house; he expressed much regret that it was not in his power, therefore, to show the bride and bridegroom hospitality. Shelley saw him several times afterwards; I never did.

I was curious to see something of the courts of justice; I told Bysshe to ask his friend, how this could be effected.

His answer was, "It was impossible; it was vacation, and all the courts were closed."

Being one day alone in the Parliament Close, I observed that the Parliament House was open. I entered it, as others did. I saw one very old man

on the bench; his head was shaking, and he shook the papers, which he held in his trembling hands; with a feeble, broken, quivering voice, he was prattling something in broad Scotch. Very few persons were present. It was interlocutory, they said,—merely interlocutory.

I asked a man, who appeared to be an usher, or door-keeper, who the judge was.

"Oh! he is an old man; a poor, old creature; a poor, wretched, old creature; a miserable, old creature!"

In England, such an answer, spoken aloud, would have appeared indecorous; but we are a less wise—a less civilised people. Probably the superannuated Rhadamanthus was deaf, as well as feeble, for he heeded it not. I still persisted in asking his name.

"It is just the Lord Ordinary."

"But what is his name?"

"It is just the Lord Ordinary. He will have a name. It is very like——Oh! he will have a name! It is very like, indeed;—but I do not rightly ken what it is. I dare say he will have a name. It is just the Lord Ordinary,—poor, old creature!" And in this the bystanders unanimously concurred.

I read afterwards with pleasure, and with profit, the Institutions of Lord Stair, and those of Erskine; the writings of Lord Kames, of Sir George Mackenzie, and others.

The bright lights of Scottish Jurisprudence are not lightly to be contemned. There have been some truly great men in their College of Justice. We cannot boast such names in England among our judges;—by no means. Lord Monboddo—some whimsical fancies, such as spring up in inventive minds, like weeds in a rich soil, alone excepted,—was a star of the first magnitude. So profound a scholar as James Burnet—a genius so original, so splendid; a man so learned, so liberal-minded—our English Bench could never show.

It is true that the Lords of Session have more leisure than is conceded to our over-worked functionaries; but it is even more true that all men ought to have leisure, and plenty of leisure, otherwise they inevitably become technical and narrow-minded, every day and every hour growing continually more ignorant, and more incapable of enlarged, enlightened, and comprehensive views.

From the able and elegant authors of Scottish Jurisprudence I have learned much theoretically; but practically, and by my own personal experience, all that I could myself discover was,—that the Lord Ordinary very probably has a name; but what it is, nobody knows, and nobody cares.

Shelley got lots of good books whilst we were in Edinburgh; where he got them, I know not: there they were. He brought them in himself, as he wanted

them, and took them away again under his arm. Whether they belonged to a circulating library, he did not inform me; or to some public library; from the nature of the works, most likely to the latter. Possibly he obtained access to it through the introduction of his fellow-passenger, the young advocate. If there was any stamp, or name of ownership, or distinguishing mark in these volumes, I did not observe it. There were several French books; some works of the modern French philosophers, and some of the immortal Buffon.

With one treatise of the writer last-named Shelley was charmed; he translated it carefully, and, as I thought, elegantly and eloquently. We went over it patiently together, and he consulted me as to the meaning of certain passages. He designed to publish it, but what became of the MSS. I cannot say. I never saw it after we quitted Edinburgh. Claire d'Albe was one of our books. It is a moral tale, by Madame Cottin, several of whose works—as Elizabeth and The Saracen—are extensively popular, especially in ladies' schools. Harriet was well versed in these, knowing them almost by heart. She took very kindly to the sorrows of Clara, the heroine, a married lady, young and beautiful. She had a lover; their attachment was mutual, and for some time innocent: eventually the poor young lady falls; and then, having ceased to be estimable, she forthwith ceased

to exist,—ceased spontaneously, as a lamp goes out of itself, when the pure spirit, by which the bright flame was fed, fails. Clara was the lamp, conjugal fidelity was the spirits of wine which kept her burning; when the latter is gone, the former, of necessity, is extinguished.

The tale is prettily told, in the same simple, graceful, touching style, as the other novels of the fair author. The principal incident, no doubt, is of a warm character, as it is in many other works of imagination which are very generally read; but it is handled with delicacy, and with modesty in language and sentiments. The gentle Harriet considered the final catastrophe—the death of Clara—quite as a matter of course,—an inevitable necessity; that the termination of the unfortunate affair was indeed exquisitely natural; and, moreover, that it was fit this should be known, particularly by her own sex, wherever the English language is spoken. Accordingly, she translated the tale from the original French. She rendered the two volumes exactly and correctly; and wrote the whole out fairly, without blot or blemish, upon the smoothest, whitest, finest paper, in a small, neat, flowing and legible feminine hand. She employed her mornings thus, whilst Bysshe was engaged with his version of Buffon's treatise. Her elegant MS. disappeared also; I never saw it after we left Scotland. I think I was

informed that an English translation had already been published. It has been represented by reckless or ill-informed biographers that Harriet was illiterate, and therefore she was not a fit companion for Shelley. This representation is not correct; she had been well-educated; and as the coffee-house people could not have taught her more than they knew themselves, which was little or nothing, she must have received her education at school; and she was unquestionably a credit to the establishment.

Drawing she had never learned, at least she gave no indications of taste or skill in that department; her proficiency in music was moderate, and she seemed to have no very decided natural talent for it; her accomplishments were slight, but with regard to acquirements of higher importance, for her years, she was exceedingly well read. I have seldom, if ever, met with a girl who had read so much as she had, or who had so strong an inclination for reading. I never once saw a Bible, a prayer book, or any devotional work, in her hand; I never heard her utter a syllable on the subject of religion, either to signify assent or dissent, approbation, or censure, or doubt; Eucharis, or Egeria, or Antiope, could not have appeared more entirely uninstructed than herself in such matters. I never heard her say that she had been at church, or ever once visited any place of worship; never, in my hearing, did she

criticise any sermon, as is so common with the generality of young ladies, or express admiration of, or curiosity concerning, a popular preacher. Her music was wholly secular; of the existence of sacred music she seemed to be unconscious, and never to have heard the illustrious name of Handel. Her reading was not of a frivolous description; she did not like light, still less trifling, ephemeral productions. Morality was her favourite theme; she found most pleasure in works of a high ethical tone. Telemachus and Belisarius were her chosen companions, and other compositions of the same leaven, but of less celebrity.

She was fond of reading aloud; and she read remarkably well, very correctly, and with a clear, distinct, agreeable voice, and often emphatically. She was never weary of this exercise, never fatigued; she never ceased of her own accord, and left off reading only on some interruption. She has read to me for hours and hours; whenever we were alone together, she took up a book and began to read, or more commonly read aloud from the work, whatever it might be, which she was reading to herself. If anybody entered the room she ceased to read aloud, but recommenced the moment he retired. I was grateful for her kindness; she has read to me grave and excellent books innumerable. If some few of these were a little wearisome, on the whole I

profited greatly by her lectures. I have sometimes certainly wished for rather less of the trite moral discourses of Idomeneus and Justinian, which are so abundant in her two favourite authors, and a little more of something less in the nature of truisms; but I never showed any signs of impatience. In truth, the good girl liked a piece of resistance, a solid tome, where a hungry reader might read and come again. I have sometimes presumed to ask her to read some particular work, but never to object to anything which she herself proposed. If it was agreeable to listen to her, it was not less agreeable to look at her: she was always pretty, always bright, always blooming; smart, usually plain in her neatness; without a spot, without a wrinkle, not a hair out of its place. The ladies said of her, that she always looked as if she had just that moment stepped out of a glass-case; and so indeed she did. And they inquired, how that could be? The answer was obvious; she passed her whole life in reading aloud, and when that was not permitted, in reading to herself, and invariably works of a calm, soothing, tranquillising, sedative tendency; and in such an existence there could be nothing to stain, to spot, to heat, to tumble, to cause any the slightest disorder of the hair or dress. Hers was the most distinct utterance I ever heard; I do not believe that I lost

a single word of the thousands of pages which she read to me. Of course I never dared to yield to sleep, even when the virtuous Idomeneus was giving wise laws to Crete, and therefore I am now alive to write our simple story.

The more drowsy Bysshe would sometimes drop off: his innocent slumbers gave serious offence, and his neglect was fiercely resented; he was stigmatised, as an inattentive wretch.

A distinct articulation is pleasing, but by no means common. Another young lady was so good as to read to me for several years; but I never heard a single word she said. However, I cherished the hope, that some day or other I might at least hear one word, as a reward for my patience; but I was disappointed, and the poor girl has long ceased to read and to breathe.

CHAPTER XIII.

It was the year of the famous comet, and of the still more famous vintage, the year 1811; the weather was fine, and often hot; not one drop of rain fell all the time I was in Edinburgh. The nights were clear and bright; we often contemplated the stranger comet from Princes Street; and not only the comet, but the ordinary array of the shining hosts of heaven. The heavens are the home of a divine poet; the stars are his nearest kindred: Shelley frequently turned his wild, wandering eyes homewards; he was fond of looking at the stars, and of speculating about the heavenly bodies, and of reading and hearing the speculations of astronomers. He had, however, a leaning, as became a poet, towards the systems, hypotheses, and figments of the first and ancient star-gazers; moreover, his attention had been first called towards celestial matters by his beloved Pliny, the greater part of whose vast and inestimable work on Natural History he had translated at Eton; he dearly loved

to ponder over that author's inexplicable doctrines, and to endeavour to comprehend and expound them.

The modern system of Astronomy is suited to dull fellows only—to mere matter-of-fact men, calculators, mathematicians; not to poets by any means. The human imagination cannot deal with their millions of millions of miles; it cannot conceive, cannot form any notion, idea, or image of a quintillion, or even of a trillion: these mighty reckonings may be, and doubtless are, mathematically correct and true; but they are poetically monstrous and false.

A pretty little milk-white goat, sitting quietly in the shady nook of a galaxy, with two golden horns, one of them broken off and filled with fruits and flowers, will supply a charming mythic fable, which the lunar parallax will never yield. Consequently, a Quaker Globe Celestial, devoid of ornament, dreading paganism, shunning idolatry, not allowing free play to that heathenish faculty, the fancy, and with which William Penn or George Fox might have surveyed the heavens; a celestial globe, not of a drab or slate colour, it is true, but wanting the figures of the constellations, merely dotted over with stars of different magnitudes, was odious and execrable to the young poet. A globe robbed of all the men and women, of the ships, scales, cups, crowns, of the various birds, beasts, and fishes, that had been

assigned to each hemisphere by a prudent antiquity, seemed, and with reason, unsatisfactory and fraudulent.

"Instead of omitting these mythological pictures on our globes, how much better it would be, were it possible; how pretty, how indescribably pleasing," he would sometimes exclaim, peering upwards into boundless space, "to vary the uniform blue ground by delicately tinting above us all the signs of the zodiac, and all the other principal asterisms; Orion in full glory, with his bright-eyed dog, Hercules on his knees, both the Bears with their keeper, 'Prince Memnon's sister,' and all the rest of that goodly company!"

I soon found, to my sorrow, that my project of making pedestrian excursions from Edinburgh was quite impracticable; my friend could not possibly leave his young bride alone: to have gone by myself, which I would willingly have done, if I might, would have been unpopular, being accounted unkind: the scheme therefore was entirely relinquished, although not without regret; and I never could find another opportunity of executing the design, consequently I know nothing more of Scotland than the little which I could learn during my first and only visit to its majestic and picturesque capital.

I cannot say that I never set foot in Scotland

since the year 1811; for the last twenty years it has been my fortune to pay an annual visit in the autumn to Berwick-upon-Tweed, and then I have several times walked far enough, and it was not very far, beyond Lamberton Toll-Bar, or the Starch-House Gate, to be able to pluck a thistle on Scottish ground; and fixing the national emblem and flower in my button-hole, as an appropriate tribute of respect to "the very focus of elegance," I walked back to Berwick and to dinner.

On one occasion, returning with St. Andrew's chosen flower in my breast, I met a brave Scot, and related to him asking, where I had been and what I had done; "Oh! That is a very poor memento," he said, "you should have proceeded onwards to some house of entertainment, and just tasted our whisky!"

Our mornings were passed in study; after dinner, we all went forth together, to take as long a walk as could be brought within the compass of an afternoon. We returned at dusk, to draw refreshment from "the kittle," brewing, not punch, but the sober beverage of tea; and we listened to Harriet reading aloud until bed-time. I often stole out alone, generally before breakfast, to inspect such objects as were not interesting to my young friends. Our time wore away thus very agreeably, and not without improvement.

At the end of six weeks, it was necessary that I should return to York. It was agreed that we should travel thither together, in order that they might remain with me there, according to Bysshe's favourite phrase, "for ever," or in ordinary, unpoetic language, during the year which I was to spend in that city; and at the conclusion of that period we were all to remove to London, and to dwell there together "for ever," writing, reading, and being read to.

A dispensation was reluctantly granted to me, but without absolution, by the philosophers to pursue, to my inevitable destruction, the vile and degrading study of the law. It was granted, I believe, because it was considered that my own sagacity, and their arguments and persuasions, would in a very short time induce me to abandon it.

At Edinburgh, as elsewhere, Bysshe received many letters. His uncle, Captain Pilfold, was the most useful of his correspondents at that time, for not only did he write cheerful, friendly, hearty letters, some of which I read, but he kindly supplied his peccant nephew with money. The cloud-compelling son of Sir Bysshe was fulminating and furious, darting his franked lightenings on all sides. His letter to my father is a good specimen of a mild thunderbolt.

FIELD PLACE, *8th September*, 1811.

DEAR SIR,—

I wrote to you from London by the advice of a gentleman in the law, who I had advised with respecting my son having withdrawn himself from my protection, and set off for Scotland with a young female, though at that time it was conjectured he might make York in his way.

This morning I have a letter from a gentleman, who had heard from him, that he was at Edinburgh, and that H. had joined him there. I think it right to give you the information, as from one parent to another, both of whom have experienced so much affliction and anxiety. God only knows what can be the end of all this disobedience.

I am, Sir,

Your very obedient servant,

T. SHELLEY.

To J. H., Norton.

The old ex-coffeehouse keeper was bound in decency to affect to be very angry; to tie his purse-strings tight, and tightly to button up his breeches pockets, as a mode of displaying virtuous indignation, which is rather palatable than painful to a parsimonious person. He felt no pangs, therefore, and found no difficulty in being exceedingly angry with his disobedient daughter and rebellious son-in-law after this thrifty fashion. And indeed his

careful habits, not less than his Israelitish aspect, had won for him, as his daughter Harriet informed me, the designation of "Jew Westbrook."

The hero of the Nile, the conqueror of Aboukir Bay, the gallant Captain, was more genial and considerate than the parliament-man and the vintner:— "To be confoundedly angry," he wrote, "is all very well; but to stop the supplies is a great deal too bad!" Our journey was to be performed by post-chaise, in compliment to the lady, and for her particular convenience. There was nothing, as far as I remember, pleasing or curious in my return to York. We endeavoured to dine at the Press Inn, where we were execrably entertained: we passed the first night at Belford comfortably. I pointed out to Shelley the fine crops of turnips, to which the priggish lecturer on the top of the coach had called my attention, on my way to Edinburgh, and I spoke of the noble fields of barley.

Poor Harriet was not much of a farmer. Idomeneus had taught her many valuable things, but not agriculture, which, however, in his sage laws, he highly honoured.

"Pray tell me, Bysshe," she asked, "which are the turnips, and which is the barley?"

"Why, you little Cockney," Shelley, the heir of entail to broad lands, exclaimed, "surely you know turnips from barley!"

It was the end of October: the fine weather had come to an end at last; rain was brewing after the long drought; and indeed it rained a little at intervals. Travelling by post-chaise was always disagreeable to me; the necessity of changing the chaise every post was troublesome and unpleasant. Shelley could not bear restraint of any kind; he hated the confinement excessively; and besides the ordinary trouble of changing, paying, looking after the luggage, and the innumerable worthless, but inestimable and indispensable, articles which a lady must carry with her on a journey, on this occasion there was the extraordinary trouble, and a very great one it was, of looking after Shelley himself, lest perchance he should suddenly vanish, and by his disappearance delay our farther progress for an indefinite period.

Once, at Berwick, when Harriet had taken her seat, and all was ready, Bysshe was missing; but he was retaken on fresh pursuit, being captured by myself, as he was standing on the Walls in a drizzling rain, gazing mournfully at the wild and dreary sea, with looks not less wild and dreary.

The next day we reached Darlington, and were lodged and treated there sufficiently well. Shelley had been much struck in the morning by the majestic exterior of Alnwick Castle, and diverted by the strange stone figures on the battlements, savouring

less of the Middle Ages than of Sadler's Wells. The next and third day completed our journey, and brought us to York. The weather was gloomy, misty, rainy, and altogether dispiriting, and the young travellers met with nothing to amuse or rouse them. Harriet read aloud in the chaise, almost incessantly, Holcroft's Novels. The rigid, Spartan, iron tone of that stern author was not encouraging. Bysshe sometimes sighed deeply.

"Is it necessary to read all that, Harriet dear?" he inquired pathetically.

"Yes! absolutely."

"Cannot you skip some part?"

"No! it is impossible!"

A poet is a creature of first impressions. The greater the poet, the more completely is he subjugated by this law of poetic temperament. The aspect of the narrow, crooked old streets of York may be remarkable, peculiar, to an antiquary even pleasing, but is never cheerful, not in the brightest weather. At the close of a dull, autumnal day, in rain and in mud, it was oppressive. For weeks, for months, the imaginative Bysshe had set his heart upon joining me at York, which place, no doubt, his warm, creative fancy had painted as a bower of beauty and of bliss; the reality, seen, moreover, to great disadvantage, at once disenchanted him.

For the convenience of my friends, I had delayed

my return for a few days,—for a very few days only; the woman with whom I had lodged took advantage of the delay, as such people invariably do when anything is to be gotten,—even Methodists, saints, Babes of Grace, their superior sanctity notwithstanding, readily give in to such mundane tricks,—and she had let the whole of her house very advantageously to a family for the winter. Instead of going straight to my most comfortable lodgings, as we had anticipated, it was necessary to undertake the very unpoetic task—for Shelley positively refused to pass the night at an inn—of seeking for lodgings in a provincial town, in the dim twilight, and in mizzling rain. I engaged apartments, not because I liked their appearance, but by reason of the extreme impatience of my friend, at the dingy dwelling of certain dingy old milliners.

On circuit and other dull errands, it has been my hard fate too often to lodge with dress-makers, or mantua-makers, and I have often wondered when and where the dresses, which these females professed to make, were really made, since no trace of them ever appeared. Still more have I wondered by what persons such secret mantuas and mantles were worn; whether by sister spectres in churchyards, or by grim hags, like themselves, at witches' Sabbaths.

We entered upon our dim abode immediately,—

immediately, that was indispensable; and we procured dinner from an inn; for the weird sisters were above doing anything useful, or indeed any thing at all, that I could ever discover. The house was dismal and poverty stricken, and the mistresses of the house were disobliging: I did not make them less so by an ill-timed joke. It was doubtless improper to joke in the presence of two ancient damsels, with whom the sole business of a long life had been to disprove the assertion that life is a jest, and to demonstrate that it is something exquisitely serious and tiresome. I had occasion to go into their private room, a back parlour, and to wait there a while. It seemed proper to say something to them.

"You are dress-makers, I believe?"

Both in unison responded: "We are."

"But where, dear ladies, are the dresses which you make?"

They seemed disconcerted at the question, and displeased, and returned no answer.

"I suppose you make dresses for 'the Invisible Lady;'—invisible dresses!"

A little before that time there had been an exhibition, which was very popular everywhere, and particularly so at York. It has long been discontinued, but it was very attractive in its day, and very remarkable; and it has never been distinctly

explained how it was managed. The visitor entered a room; from the middle of the ceiling hung, by a silken cord, a balloon of silk about a yard in diameter; it was open at the bottom, and was seen to be quite empty. There were two tubes of brass terminating in the balloon. Through one of them the question was proposed in a whisper; by the other the answer of the "Invisible Lady" was returned.

I once went to see the "Invisible Lady," as the phrase was; and having convinced myself by looking into the balloon, and moving it about, that she was really invisible, I had the temerity to whisper, very gently, "Were you ever in love, my dear?"

I then placed my ear close to the other tube, and a feminine voice softly whispered back, "Never, till I saw you!"

The answer, containing such an avowal, I had the discretion, notwithstanding the importunities of my companions, to keep to myself.

The next morning, after my return to York, I went betimes to Chambers, where I was cordially received by my Conveyancer; he told me that he was very full of business, but he found time to laugh heartily at some of my adventures in Scotland, and to express a wish that he had been with me. I remained at Chambers until dinner time; and I had the satisfaction to surrender an out-standing term to attend upon the Inheritance.

The next morning also, Bysshe announced that he must go to London that night by the mail, to see Whitton.

"What, so soon? Put it off for a few days!"

"It is absolutely necessary to see him immediately; I must go."

For any good the poor fellow got by seeing Whitton, he might just as well have postponed his visit indefinitely, even until this hour. However, Bysshe departed, as he had resolved to do.

I was obliged—morally obliged—to attend my Conveyancer; consequently, I went to his Chambers every morning, immediately after breakfast, at nine o'clock, and I remained there until the hour of dinner, five. Poor Harriet was very lonely; the weather was rainy; and when it was fair she did not go out, having unfortunately transplanted her London notions of propriety to York: she considered it incorrect to walk in the streets of that quiet city by herself. In the evening, she read aloud to me Holcroft's Anna St. Ives, some of Dr. Robertson's historical works, and other staid and instructive books. Whenever she conversed, after duly and dutifully wondering, what Bysshe was about at that moment, she spoke in the style of an inspired prophetess of a glorious advent; of the impending commencement of a new millennium of happiness; of the instant return of the golden age;

of the coming of Eliza, who was to accompany Bysshe when he returned. This harbinger of all felicity was her sister; she had no brothers, and only one sister, an elder sister; old enough, indeed, to have been her mother. She bore her sister great love, or perhaps she had entire faith in her; she worshipped her, not so much through a feeling of veneration, but a strong sense of paramount duty, and yielded her implicit, unreasoning obedience. Her mother was as dignified as silk and satin could make her, and was fully capable of sitting all day long with her hands before her, but utterly incapable of aught besides, good, or bad, except possibly of hearing herself addressed occasionally as, Mamma. Eliza had tended, guided, and ruled Harriet from her earliest infancy; she doubtless had married her, had made the match, had put her up to everything that was to be said, or done, as Shelley's letters plainly show; and she was now about to come on board again, after a short absence on shore, to hoist her flag at the mast head, to take the entire command, and for ever to regulate and direct the whole course of her married life. Eliza, I was told, was beautiful, exquisitely beautiful; an elegant figure, full of grace; her face was lovely,—dark bright eyes; jet black hair, glossy; a crop upon which she bestowed the care it merited,—almost all her time; and she was so sensible, so amiable, so good!

Bysshe's return was ardently desired; partly for his own sake, but principally on account of the lost treasure, which he was to restore, and whose protracted absence began to be severely felt, on account of the rich freight of beauty and virtue which the homeward-bound vessel would surely bring back.

One evening, I returned to our lodgings from a stroll after dinner, and found to my surprise that the peerless Eliza had arrived.

Harriet was seated on the sofa by the side of her good genius, her guardian angel, her familiar demon:—"Eliza has come; was it not good of her; so kind?" I was presented to her. She hardly deigned to notice me.

Such neglect on the part of so superior a being, although a barmaid by origin, or at best a daughter of the house, appeared reasonable enough.

"I thought Bysshe was to have brought you with him."

"Oh dear, no!"

The tea things were on the table; the new comer was of too sublime a nature to endure the contact of a tea-pot, and poor Harriet's being was too highly sublimated by the august presence to attend, as usual, to the vulgar requisitions of the tea-table. The case was important and urgent.

"Shall I make tea?"

This was not forbidden, and it was made. Eliza looked contemptuously at the cup of tea, which I placed before her. Harriet descended from the seventh heaven so far as to stir, and even to sip her tea. I helped myself freely, like a good Philistine as I was, whilst the music of the spheres held its thrilling course. Poor little Harriet was wrapt in ecstasy; she whispered inaudibly to Eliza: Eliza sighed, and returned a still lower whisper.

I had ample leisure to contemplate the acquisition to our domestic circle. She was older than I had expected, and she looked much older than she was. The lovely face was seamed with the small-pox, and of a dead white, as faces so much marked and scarred commonly are; as white, indeed, as a mass of boiled rice, but of a dingy hue, like rice boiled in dirty water. The eyes were dark, but dull, and without meaning; the hair was black and glossy, but coarse; and there was the admired crop,—a long crop, much like the tail of a horse,—a switch tail. The fine figure was meagre, prim, and constrained. The beauty, the grace, and the elegance existed, no doubt, in their utmost perfection, but only in the imagination of her partial young sister. Her father, as Harriet told me, was familiarly called "Jew Westbrook," and Eliza greatly resembled one of the dark-eyed daughters of Judah.

On the day after the auspicious arrival of the amiable stranger, Bysshe returned from London; his negotiations had been unsuccessful; his long, fatiguing, and expensive journey had been undertaken in vain. Diplomatic notes without stint; protocols, deuterocols, and chiliostocols innumerable; articles of honourable capitulation, projects of treaties of alliance, offensive and defensive, claims and counter-claims; rigmarole, solemn, stupid, barbarous, and ungrammatical; such were the fruits of these conferences. The whole history of diplomacy, public or secret, can supply nothing more empty and effete than the negotiations with his Excellency the Great Plenipotentiary, Whitton: an impartial posterity, however, will ascribe the failure in these transactions rather to the Emperor and Autocrat, than to his accredited minister. The State Papers which were transmitted on the present occasion, will show, once for all, in how ungenial and unsatisfactory a manner they wasted their time and strength in vain bickerings, without the sinews of war, or the sure bond of peace—money.

[*Copy.*]

GREAT JAMES STREET, 23*rd October*, 1811.

SIR,

Your letter of the 20th instant came to my

hands after the post of yesterday. Your father's communications to me have been of a very painful nature, resulting from the manner in which you have treated and written to and of him. He stated to me his determination not to supply you with any money until he shall be satisfied that your future conduct will be directed by a judgment more consonant to your duty to him as your parent, and his and your situation. As, therefore, it remains with you to seek a restoration of confidence in your father towards you, and as the question is to his injured feelings a matter of serious consideration, I beg to say, that it is my wish you should not take the proposed journey to London, but that your communication may be in Writing, for by so doing I shall avoid the inconvenience which may result from my reporting to your father the import of what you might think proper to say.

I am, Sir, your humble servant,

WM. WHITTON.

To P. B. Shelley, Esq., Captain Pilfold's, R.N.,
Cuckfield, Sussex.

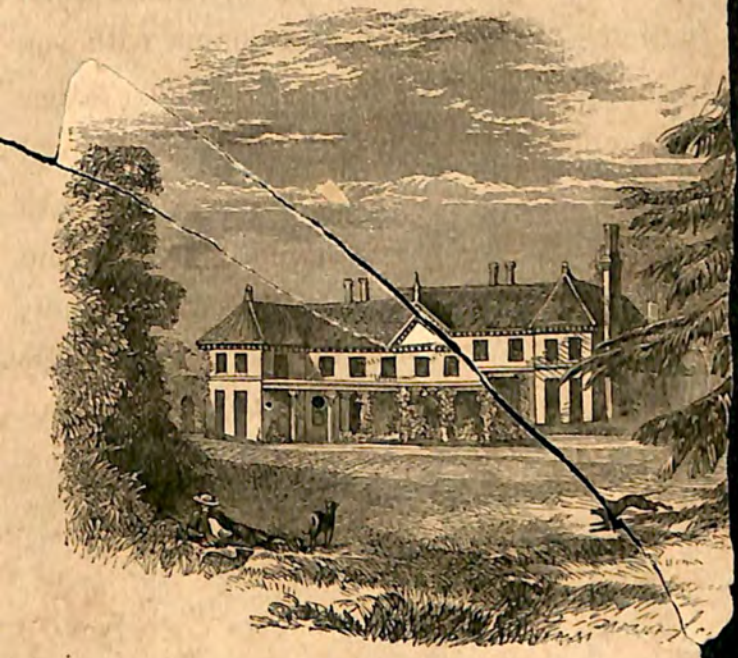
GREAT JAMES STREET, 23*rd October*, 1811.

Mr. Whitton sends Mr. P. B. Shelley a copy of the letter he addressed to him by the post of yesterday, and which Mr. Whitton considers as be a direct

reply to the note which Mr. P. B. Shelley s
him last night at Camberwell.

Please to direct any further communica
Great James Street, with Mr. Whitton's
ments.

To P. B. S., Turk's Coffee House, Strand.



FIELD PLACE.

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